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LETTERS

TO

RICHARD HEBER, ESQ.

LONDON:
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LETTERS

TO

RICHARD HEBER, ESQ.

CONTAINING

CRITICAL REMARKS

ON THE

SERIES OF NOVELS BEGINNING WITH "WAVERLEY,"

AND

AN ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN THEIR AUTHOR.

By Adolphus.

If thou be'st a man, shew thyself in thy likeness: if thou be'st a devil, take 't as thou list.—TEMPEST, Act III. Sc. 2.

NN-f-16

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR RODWELL AND MARTIN,
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CONTENTS.

LETTER I.

Introduction—General reasons for believing the novels to have been written by the author of Marmion . Page 1

LETTER II.

Resemblance between the novelist and poet in their tastes, studies, and habits of life, as illustrated by their works.—Both Scotchmen—Habitual residents in Edinburgh—Poets—Antiquaries—German and Spanish scholars—Equal in classical attainments—Deeply read in British history—Lawyers—Fond of field sports—Of Dogs—Acquainted with most manly exercises—Lovers of military subjects—The novelist apparently not a soldier 9

LETTER III.

Subject of Letter II. continued—The novelist is, like the poet, a man of good society—His stories never betray forgetfulness of honourable principles, or ignorance of good manners—Spirited pictures of gentlemanly character—Colonel Mannering—Judicious treatment of elevated historical personages.

The novelist quotes and praises most contemporary poets, except the author of Marmion—Instances in which the poet has appeared to slight his own unacknowledged, but afterwards avowed productions 33

LETTER IV.

Comparison of the works themselves—All distinguished by good morals and good sense—The latter particularly shewn in the management of character.—Prose Style—Its general features—Plainness and facility—Grave banter—Instances—Manner of telling a short story—Negligence—Scoticisms—Great propriety and correctness occasionally, and sometimes unusual sweetness—Instances . . . Page 48

LETTER V.

Dialogue in the novels and poems—Neat colloquial turns in the former, such as cannot be expected in romantic poetry—Happy adaptation of dialogue to character, whether merely natural, or artificially modified, as by profession, local habits, &c.—Instances—Faults of dialogue, as connected with character of speakers—Quaintness of language and thought—Bookish air in conversation—Historical personages alluding to their own celebrated acts and sayings—Unsuccessful attempts at broad vulgarity—Beauties of composition peculiar to the dialogue—Terseness and spirit—Instances—These qualities well displayed in quarrels; but not in scenes of polished raillery—Eloquence—Instances. 68

LETTER VI.

The Poetry of the author of Marmion generally characterized—His habits of composition and turn of mind, as a poet, compared with those of the novelist—Their descriptions simply conceived and composed, without abstruse and far-fetched circumstances or refined comments—Great advantage derived by both from accidental combinations of images, and the association of objects in the mind with persons, events, &c.—Distinctness and liveliness of effect in narrative and description—Narrative usually picturesque or dramatic, or both—Distinctness, &c. of effect, produced in various ways—Instances—Striking pictures of individuals—Their persons,

dress, &c.—Descriptions sometimes too obviously picturesque—Subjects for painters—Effects of light frequently noticed and finely described—Both writers excel in grand and complicated scenes—Among detached and occasional ornaments, the Similes particularly noticed—Their frequency and beauty—Instances—Similes and metaphors sometimes quaint and pursued too far—Instances Page 102

LETTER VII.

Stories of the two writers compared—These are generally connected with true history, and have their scene laid in a real place—Local peculiarities diligently attended to—Instances in which the novelist and poet have celebrated the same places—They frequently describe these as seen by a traveller, (the hero, or some other principal personage) for the first time—Dramatic mode of relating story—Soliloquies—Some scenes degenerate into melodrame—Lyrical pieces introduced sometimes too theatrically.

Comparative unimportance of heroes—Various causes of this fault—Heroes rejected by ladies, and marrying others whom they had before slighted—Personal struggle between a civilized and a barbarous hero—Characters resembling each other—Female portraits in general—Fathers and daughters—Characters in Paul's Letters—Wycliffe and Risingham—Glossin and Hatteraick—Other characters compared.

Long periods of time abruptly passed over—Surprises, unexpected discoveries, &c.—These sometimes too forced and artificial—Frequent recourse to the marvellous—Dreams well described—Living persons mistaken for spectres—Deaths of Burley, Risingham, and Rashleig . . 146

LETTER VIII.

Comparison of particular passages—Descriptions—Miscellaneous thoughts—Instances, in which the two writers have resorted to the same sources of information, and borrowed the

same incidents, &c.—Same authors quoted by both—The poet, like the novelist, fond of mentioning his contemporaries, whether as private friends or as men publicly distinguished—Author of Marmion never notices the author of Waverley, (see Letter III.)—Both delight in frequently introducing an antiquated or fantastic dialect—Peculiarities of expression common to both writers—Conclusion . . Page 195

ERRATA.

Page 36, l. 14, *before* matchless, *omit* a.
42, l. 16, *read* proofs already adduced.
151, l. 6, *for* Westburn flat, *read* Westburnflat.
156, l. 12, *for* ah! *read* bah!
160, l. 25, *a comma after* interference.
165, l. 26, *after* for, *omit* the sake of.
169, l. 26, *for* feminine, *read* unfeminine.
195, l. 11, *for* hitherto not, *read* not hitherto.
213, l. 16, *for* tre, *read* true.
213, l. 20, *between the words*, Do Veniam, *omit the comma.*
231, l. 16, *for* closing-scene, *read* closing scene.

LETTERS

TO

RICHARD HEBER, ESQ.

LETTER I.

——————— Mirantur, ut unum
Scilicet egregii mortalem altique silenti.
Hor. Sat. II. vi. 57.

It is, I think, four years, Sir, since I had the good fortune to be present when the novels of Waverley, Guy Mannering, and The Antiquary, formed the subject of a conversation, in which you participated. On the never-failing question, to what author those delightful works should be ascribed, I was gratified by hearing you advance and strongly support the same opinion which had been for some time established in my own mind. The manner in which you reviewed and illustrated the subject rendered it doubly interesting, and while I felt an increased confidence in the justness of my former conclusions, I became eager to confirm them, if possible, beyond a doubt, by new accessions of evidence.

Opportunities were quickly offered for the pursuit of this object. Another tale, another series of tales, and again an-

other series, were launched with dazzling rapidity into the world by the same concealed and wonder-working hand. I failed not to remark in each successive production some characteristic features which sufficiently betrayed its origin: but the zeal with which I prosecuted this fanciful speculation was occasionally damped by the reflection that I might be wasting perseverance in penetrating a mystery which would, perhaps, in a few more days be laid open to the public by a voluntary announcement. But days and months of expectation follow one another, and still the accomplished unknown inexorably persists in his concealment: it is even dreaded by some worthy and inquisitive persons, that the same reserved humour may descend with him to his grave; for what limits can be assigned to that man's taciturnity, who has already kept a secret nearly seven years? In the mean time public conjecture, which had long been unsettled and contradictory, has begun to take a more uniform and constant direction. I remember that when I had the pleasure of listening to you on this subject, you recapitulated the names and pretensions of several persons in whom different literary parties had affected to discern the author of Waverley. But of all these individuals there now remains only one, whose claims to that honourable title have not gradually faded into obscurity. The vague and far-fetched surmises, which engaged attention for a time, have almost every where given place to that more probable opinion, in which I had the satisfaction of concurring with you, that the historian of Waverley and Henry Bertram, of Cosmo Comyne Bradwardine and Jonathan Oldbuck; that the pensive Peter Pattieson, the sagacious Jedediah Cleishbotham, the erudite Laurence Templeton, and the discreet Captain Clutterbuck, are one and the same personage with the poetical

chronicler of Flodden Field and Bannockburn, the enchanting minstrel of Loch-Katrine, the grey-headed harper whose romantic verse beguiled the melancholy of Monmouth's widow, and the cunning yeoman of Cumberland, who wooed a simple heiress with legends of King Arthur's knights, and carried her to Scotland between the cantos.

Concluding then, that the object of our curiosity has unkindly determined to keep that curiosity at bay for an indefinite period, and observing most persons inclined to adopt what I conceive to be the only plausible opinion, I have collected into one series, which I now take the liberty of submitting to your consideration, those arguments which have had the greatest effect in deciding my own judgment, and which may serve to justify, if they did not originally assist in convincing, the many who think as I do. Some of the proofs which I propose to offer, have never yet, I believe, been noticed; others, although they may from time to time have presented themselves to the public mind, and insensibly given it a bias toward the opinion now prevailing, have not hitherto been closely examined or distinctly stated; and even those which are most obvious and familiar will gain something in force and clearness, when systematically arranged, and exhibited in one view.

It may at first sight appear idle and frivolous to propose the formal discussion of a subject like this; and I am not so much impressed with the importance of my own labours as to feel very deeply interested in averting the imputation. Yet I think the trifling pains bestowed on such a task may be justified even to the most rigid inquirer after utility. It is a useful exercise of the mind to pursue any truth through a course of circumstantial evidence; and as the proofs I am about to adduce will, in a great measure, be derived from the characteristic beauties and blemishes of works deservedly

admired, it is surely excusable to hope that a dissertation of this kind, considered without reference to its ultimate object, and merely as an essay of comparative criticism, will not be found wholly uninteresting or unprofitable.

It must indeed be remembered that conjectures and speculations on any matter of fact, lose all their importance as soon as that fact is positively and directly ascertained, and that on the present occasion it is in the power of one mysterious individual, by pronouncing either a broad negative or a decided affirmative, to transport my fair and hopeful fabric of presumptions into the obscure world of things lost and forgotten. But this is a catastrophe for which every builder of an hypothesis must hold himself prepared; and should the monument of my trivial researches be doomed to vanish from its place like Aladdin's palace, or the castle in the Vale of St. John*, I shall depart well satisfied if I hear a by-stander observe, that its proportions were not ungraceful, that its parts were architecturally combined, and its ornaments aptly selected.

I will now, Sir, detain you no longer by prefatory observations, which are attended with the double disadvantage of exhausting patience and augmenting expectation, but hasten to my proposed task of identifying the author of Waverley with the author of Marmion. In making this attempt, my chief dependence will be, as I have already intimated, on the internal evidence of their respective works. I neither have the means, nor feel much desire, to obtain information from other sources; it is not for me that hints break forth, and anecdotes transpire, and oracular whispers circulate; and even if I were thus privileged, it certainly is not to you that I should offer such communications as either

* Bridal of Triermain.

novel or curious, for a packet of literary news transmitted from my hands to yours would appear almost as preposterous, to use the vulgar similitude, as a London collier unlading in the Tyne.

I would, however, suggest two or three observations applying rather to the personal conduct and circumstances of the novelist and the poet, than to the character or peculiar features of the novels or poems, and which it may be as well to consider shortly by themselves in the beginning of our inquiry. The facts I propose to touch upon are all sufficiently notorious, and may already have led many persons to draw the inferences about to be stated.

If the author of Waverley be any other than the excellent poet so often alluded to, it is astonishing that he should be able to remain concealed. The various literary accomplishments and the distinguished qualifications for society so strongly evinced in all his works, would excite observation in the most crowded community, and could not but shine conspicuously in a narrow circle. That he has passed his latter years in seclusion, or in a remote country, or in any situation estranged from active life and polished intercourse, is a supposition which, although it once obtained some countenance, must now, I think, be totally abandoned. If then we cast our eyes among those persons whose talents and acquirements have in any degree attracted general attention, how many shall we find who have given proofs of a genius, I will not say equal, but strikingly correspondent to that which has produced the celebrated novels? One such there is, but we look in vain for a second. I therefore reason like Prince Manfred's servants in the Castle of Otranto, who when they had seen the leg of an armed giant in the gallery, and his hand upon the staircase, concluded that this same preternatural personage

was owner of the gigantic helmet which lay unclaimed in the court yard.

As concealment would be difficult under these circumstances, the desire of it, too, seems unaccountable. In an author, whose name has become familiar to the public, it may be excellent policy to present himself under a mask, or like Mirabel's mistress, assail the heart of the fastidious Inconstant by stratagems and disguises. He who fearfully commits his first performance to the discretion of critics, has intelligible motives for suppressing his name; but it is difficult to believe that a writer who has been repeatedly crowned with public applause, who has acquired a reputation far more solid and more exalted than belongs in ordinary cases to a successful novelist, and who has never sullied it by a single page which the most religious and virtuous man would be ashamed to own, should deny himself the pleasure of receiving the popular homage in his own name, unless he had enjoyed other opportunities of rendering that name illustrious, and had already tasted, perhaps to satiety, the sweets of literary distinction. An author cloyed with success and secure of fame, may dally with his honours, and content himself with the refined and fanciful gratification of overhearing, as it were, the praise of his unacknowledged labours; but this coyness would be unnatural and incomprehensible in a young or hitherto unknown adventurer. I apply to our novelist the observation which very naturally suggested itself to Dryden's contemporaries on his anonymous publication of Absalom and Achitophel.

> Sure thou already art secure of fame,
> Nor want'st new glories to exalt thy name;
> What father else would have refused to own
> So great a son as god-like Absalon?
>
> Recommendatory verses, signed R. D.

It is not with fine writings as with virtuous actions, which of themselves reward the doer, although his merits should remain a secret to the world: a work of genius has mankind alone for its judges, and its only full and appropriate recompense is the approbation of mankind bestowed upon the author. It is true that the internal consciousness of having excelled may often supply the place of celebrity unjustly withheld or delayed; but where is the philosopher who, when he might, by a single word, secure to himself that dazzling prize, can patiently sit down in obscurity, and content himself with private self-congratulation? Is such a cynic the author of Waverley? I cannot think so.

This reasoning, however, is merely drawn from the ordinary tenor of worldly transactions, and the common principles of human conduct; and no man, of course, can pronounce it absolutely impossible that the mysterious novelist may have unguessed and peculiar motives for desiring concealment. I pretend only to point out probabilities; and if I knew of a single argument wholly incontrovertible, that argument should at once begin and close the present discussion.

It was just now mentioned, as a matter of supposition, that an author who had been long before the public might from policy, or even caprice, abandon his character of an established favourite, and pursue his fortune in disguise. But have we not seen this very stratagem put in practice and recently acknowledged, and by whom? I need not remind you, Sir, of the distinguished name which has at length been affixed to the Bridal of Triermain and Harold the Dauntless, for you, I remember, undoubtingly ascribed the first of these poems to its real author, when its parentage was as much a secret as that of Waverley. I might also mention the anonymous publication of Paul's Letters; but

I will not urge this point so confidently, as I do not know that there has ever been, on the one hand, any positive avowal, or on the other, any studious concealment with respect to this work. It is enough, however, to have shown by one conspicuous instance, that the mental organization of the poet, as well as of the novelist, is characterized (to speak craniologically) by an extraordinary developement of the passion for delitescency.

An observation of some force, when combined with those already stated, is, that the author of Marmion has neglected his poetical vein, in proportion as the author of Waverley has cultivated his talent for prose narration. It certainly is not to be expected that a writer should continue through life to produce metrical romances in six cantos; but there are other walks of poetry to invite his genius; and it seldom happens that an author, who has dedicated a great part of his riper years to that fascinating art, pursuing it with equal enthusiasm and success, becomes at once a truant to his muse, or at best a sparing and unfrequent votary. Again, it is scarcely less remarkable that the author of Waverley, who appears to enjoy, in a high degree, the gifts that constitute a poet; and who does not want either ambition or activity, should never (as far as we know) have made any signal exertion to distinguish himself among the 'tuneful 'quire.' This twofold mystery is simply and consistently explained by supposing that the bard has transmigrated into the writer of novels; and that the talent so unaccountably withdrawn from the department of lyrical composition, is now pouring out its exuberance in another region of literature, as the fountain Arethusa sank under the earth in Greece and re-appeared in Sicily.

LETTER II.

—— Ede quid illum
Esse putes? quemvis hominem secum attulit ad nos,
Grammaticus, rhetor, geometres, pictor, aliptes,
Augur, schœnobates, medicus, magus.
* * * * *
Ad summam, non Maurus erat, neque Sarmata, nec Thrax.
Juv. Sat. III. 74, &c.

THE internal evidence, Sir, which I have thought deserving of your notice, may be arranged in two classes. I will first solicit your attention to those parts of the anonymous works which afford glimpses of the personal character, the habits, studies, and occupations of their author, and shall invite you to remark with me, how singularly they correspond with those of our great romantic poet, as illustrated by his avowed publications. I will then point out, in the writings of these two authors, such resemblances in sentiment, language, incident, conception of character, and general dramatic arrangement, as in my opinion most satisfactorily prove the fraternal relation of Marmion and his compeers to that mysterious unacknowledged family, which, in their present circumstances, may be denominated 'The 'Children of the Mist.'

With respect to the unknown author, I suppose it would be superfluous to insist that he is a native of Scotland. He has himself informed us (in the postscript, or l'envoy, to Waverley) that he was not born a Highlander, and I think it may be gathered from his novels that, whatever spot may boast of having given him birth, a great part of his life has

been passed in the city or neighbourhood of Edinburgh. The familiarity with which he speaks of that metropolis and its environs, and of manners and customs formerly prevailing among its inhabitants, but now obsolete, fully justifies the conjecture; and his description of the walk under Salisbury Crags, which (as he says, speaking in the person of Peter Pattieson) 'used to be his favourite evening and morning 'resort,' and a scene of 'delicious musing, when life was 'young and promised to be happy*,' can hardly have been written by any other than the 'truant boy,' who 'sought 'the nest' on Blackford Hill, and has expatiated so feelingly and beautifully on the prospect of Edinburgh from that side, in the fourth canto of Marmion†.

It has been already observed, that the author of Waverley possesses, in a high degree, the qualifications of a poet. His mind seems, in fact, to be habitually, as well as naturally, given to the Muse of Song. I do not now speak of detached thoughts, single expressions, or insulated passages; the very conception and main structure of his stories is in some instances purely poetical. Take as an example the Bride of Lammermoor. Through the whole progress of that deeply affecting tale, from the gloomy and agitating scene of Lord Ravenswood's funeral to the final agony and appalling death of his ill-fated heir, we experience that fervour and exaltation of mind, that keen susceptibility of emotion, and that towering and perturbed state of the imagination, which poetry alone can produce. Thus while the events are comparatively few, and the whole plan and conduct of the tale unusually simple, our passions are fully exercised, and our expectation even painfully excited, by occurrences in themselves unimportant, conversations with-

* Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. i. ch. 7. † Stanza 24.

out any material result, and descriptions which even retard the main action. The principal character is strikingly poetical, and its effect skilfully heightened by the manner in which the subordinate figures, even those of a grotesque outline, are grouped around it. Of those interesting and highly fanciful incidents, which, although rather appendages than essential parts of the principal narrative, in fact constitute its chief beauty as a work of imagination, I need only mention, as particular examples, the ominous slaughter of the raven*, the fiendish conferences between Ailsie Gourlay and her companions†, and the legend of Lord Ravenswood and the Naiad‡, which contains in itself all the elements of a beautiful and affecting poem. I treat these as appendages, because the story might be told without them; but it must also be observed, that without them the story would not be worth telling.

It may be suggested, that the characteristic features which I have pointed out in the Bride of Lammermoor, belong rather to the species of fiction than to the individual fable, and that all romantic tales must bear the same resemblance to poetic narrative, which appears, perhaps, a little more decidedly than usual in the instance now adduced. But the observation would not hold true, even if confined to the novels of the present author. In Waverley and Guy Mannering, for example, there are flights of imagination and strokes of passion beyond the scope of a mere prose writer; but the poetical character does not predominate either in the general design, or in the majority of incidents, or in the agency by which those incidents are brought about. Both Waverley and Guy Mannering might possibly, with some

* Vol. ii. c. 7. † Vol. ii. c. 9. iii. 7, 8.
‡ Vol. i. c. 4.

loss of effect, be thrown into verse, but neither of them is, like the Bride of Lammermoor, a tale which no man but a poet could tell.

I have dwelt long upon this work, as it appeared to furnish the most striking and complete illustration of my remark on the genius of its author. If other examples were required, I would point out the Introduction to Old Mortality, and the story of serjeant More M'Alpin*, both, I think, conceived in the true spirit of poetry. It seems not improbable, that the Legend of Montrose was, in part, formed out of materials originally collected for a metrical romance; but the author has succeeded ill in making this portion of his fable combine and harmonize with the rest. There appears a natural incongruity between the lofty and imaginative, and the broad and familiar parts of the subject; they may be joined, but they refuse to blend. The Monastery is liable to a similar objection: nothing can be more poetical in conception, and sometimes in language, than the fiction of the White Maid of Avenel; but when this ætherial personage, who rides on the cloud which 'for Araby is bound,' who is

> "Something betwixt heaven and hell—
> Something that neither stood nor fell†"—

whose existence is linked by an awful and mysterious destiny to the fortunes of a decaying family; when such a being as this descends to clownish pranks, and promotes a frivolous jest about a tailor's bodkin, the course of our sym-

* Introduction to A Legend of Montrose, Tales of My Landlord, Third Series, vol. iii.

† Vol. i. c. 11.

pathies is rudely arrested, and we feel as if the author had put upon us the old-fashioned pleasantry of selling a bargain. It is an unsafe thing to venture on a high poetical flight in a composition partly ludicrous and familiar, unless some reconciling medium can be found to give mellowness and consistency to the whole. No man can be more sensible of this difficulty, for no man has more frequently triumphed over it, than the writer whom I have presumed, in the instances just cited, to pronounce unsuccessful.

From the invention and general conduct of his stories, I might proceed to the particular passages of the novelist which betray a poet's hand. But examples of this nature are so abundant, and the best of them are so familiar even to the most negligent reader, that it would be unpardonable to detain you on this point. I have only then to observe, that the passages alluded to are not merely eloquent, natural, spirited, impassioned, they are nothing if not poetical. You are probably acquainted with Mr. Hope's Memoirs of a Greek: it is a work abounding in brilliant and often affecting composition; there is much eloquent narrative, much highly-finished description; but the narrative and the description are those of an accomplished prose writer. In all that he relates we see distinctly and with pleasure the object or action which the author places before us; but there his power ceases; he has not the art of making a few words call up a host of images in the mind, and, by the happy suggestion of a single thought, transporting the reader's fancy into a world of illusion: and in this he totally differs from the author of Waverley, and from every true poet.

But the novelist (and it serves to illustrate the habitual bent of his mind) not only indulges in poetical description, where the course of his narrative obviously leads to it, but discerns, as by instinct, and seizes with enthusiasm, every

slighter opportunity which the incidents afford him for introducing such embellishments. Thus he compares the antics of a clownish boy escaped from his pedagogue to the 'frisking' of 'a goblin by moon-light*.' In describing a maiden sinking under consumption, 'You would have thought,' he says, 'that the very trees mourned for her, for their leaves 'dropt around her without a gust of wind†.' If he puts in motion a body of soldiers, by day-light they are seen issuing from among trees, their arms glance like lightning, and the waving of banners is accompanied by the clang of trumpets and kettle-drums: by night the steel caps glitter in the moon-light, and 'the dark figures of the horses and riders' are 'imperfectly traced through the gloom‡.' If a cannon is discharged from a fortress, the castle is invested 'in 'wreaths of smoke, the edges of which dissipate slowly in 'the air, while the central veil is darkened ever and anon 'by fresh clouds poured forth from the battlements,' and the spectator reflects, 'that each explosion may ring some 'brave man's knell§.' If we launch our vessel on a Highland loch, a piper makes shrill melody in the bow, or the rowers chant wild airs that float mournfully to the shore||. If we embark for a sea voyage, the white sails swell, the ship 'leans her side to the gale, and goes roaring through 'the waves, leaving a long and rippling furrow to track her 'course;' the port becomes undistinguishable in the distance, and the hills melt into the blue sky¶. This is not the pro-

* Kenilworth, vol. i. c. 9. † Waverley, vol. i. c. 4.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii. c. 23. Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. ii. c. 6, 11.

§ Waverley, vol. ii. c. 16.

|| Legend of Montrose, last vol. c. 2. Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. iv. c. 9.

¶ Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. iv. c. 7.

fessional cant of a vulgar novel-maker, whose moon trembles on the sea of course, whenever his heroine touches the lute in a balcony: it is the writing of one who has always looked at objects with the eye of a poet, and unavoidably speaks of them as he sees them.

There is, I think, no occasion to demonstrate that the author of Waverley is as great an antiquary as the author of Marmion, and as deeply infected with bibliomania as the editor of Patrick Carey's Triolets. No person can have a doubt on this latter point, who remembers the description put into the mouth of Mr. Oldbuck, of a book-collector picking up a curious work at a stall, where its value is not known*. It is an effusion from the very heart: and there can, I think, be no question, that the character of Monkbarns, with all its eccentricities, was originally created by the novelist for the purpose of parading his own hobby-horse.

While the Antiquary is before us, let me remark as a trifling circumstance, yet not unworthy of attention, that in the course of this novel (and I believe not in this only) the writer makes frequent display of his acquaintance with the language and literature of Germany, to which the author of Marmion at least is no stranger†. The poet is evidently a proficient in the Spanish tongue‡; and the novelist quotes Cervantes in the original§.

In classical learning, both writers appear to have made equal and very similar acquirements: we may trace in the

* Antiquary, vol. i. c. 3.

† See, for instance, his translation of Bürger's 'Lenore,' and other German ballads. Miscellaneous Poems, Edinburgh, 1820.

‡ See Note ii. on The Vision of Don Roderick.

§ General motto to the Tales of My Landlord.

works of either (so far as they afford any illustration of this point) the reading of a gentleman, though not the erudition of a professed scholar.

A thorough knowledge and statesman-like understanding of the domestic history and politics of Britain at various and distant periods; a familiar acquaintance with the manners and prevailing spirit of former generations, and with the characters and habits of their most distinguished men, are of themselves no cheap or common attainments; and it is rare indeed to find them united with a strong original genius, and great brilliancy of imagination. We know, however, that the towering poet of Flodden-field is also the diligent editor of Swift and Dryden, of Lord Somers's Tracts, and of Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers; that in these and other parts of his literary career he has necessarily plunged deep into the study of British history, biography, and antiquities, and that the talent and activity which he brought to these researches have been warmly seconded by the zeal and liberality of those who possessed the amplest and rarest sources of information. 'The Muse 'found him,' as he himself said long ago, 'engaged in the 'pursuit of historical and traditional antiquities, and the ex- 'cursions which he has made in her company have been 'of a nature which increases his attachment to his original 'study*.' Are we then to suppose, that another writer has combined the same powers of fancy with the same spirit of investigation, the same perseverance, and the same good fortune? and shall we not rather believe, that the

* Advertisement to Lord Somers's Tracts, ed. 1809. The poet's father also was 'curious in historical antiquities.' Note on Absalom and Achitophel. Dryden's Works, ed. 1808, vol. ix. p. 255. note.

labour employed in the illustration of Dryden has helped to fertilize the invention which produced Montrose and Old Mortality?

However it may militate against the supposition of his being a poet, I cannot suppress my opinion, that our novelist is a "man of law." He deals out the peculiar terms and phrases of that science (as practised in Scotland), with a freedom and confidence beyond the reach of any uninitiated person. If ever, in the progress of his narrative, a legal topic presents itself (which very frequently happens), he neither declines the subject, nor timidly slurs it over, but enters as largely and formally into all its technicalities, as if the case were actually 'before the fifteen.' The manners, humours, and professional *bavardage*, of lawyers are sketched with all the ease and familiarity which result from habitual observation: witness the two barristers at Gandercleuch, in the Introduction to the Heart of Mid-Lothian, and the more finished character of Paulus Pleydell, in Guy Mannering. There is much lawyer-like cleverness in the scene between Sharpitlaw, Ratcliffe, and Madge Wildfire*, where the procurator's clumsy question cuts short the fine-spun thread of his confederate's cross-examination. The trial of Effie Deans, though it contains many powerful and strongly affecting passages, is upon the whole impaired in its effect by the diffuseness and particularity, and the air of technical facility with which the proceedings are related: and I believe it is no new complaint that Mr. Bartholine Saddletree, the legal amateur, is on some occasions too liberal of his tediousness. In fact, the subject of law, which is a stumbling-block to others, is to the present writer a spot of repose; upon this theme he

* Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. ii. ch. 4.

lounges and gossips, he is *discinctus et soleatus*, and, at times, almost forgets that when an author finds himself at home and perfectly at ease, he is in great danger of falling asleep.

If then my inferences are correct, the unknown writer who was just now proved to be an excellent poet, must also be pronounced a follower of the law: the combination is so unusual, at least on this side of the Tweed, that, as Juvenal says on a different occasion,

——— bimembri
Hoc monstrum puero, vel mirandis sub aratro
Piscibus inventis, et fœtæ comparo mulæ.
Sat. XIII. l. 64, &c.

Nature has indeed presented us with one such prodigy in the author of Marmion; and it is probable, that in the author of Waverley, we only see the same specimen under a different aspect; for, however sportive the goddess may be, she has too much wit and invention to wear out a frolic by many repetitions.

A striking characteristic of both writers is their ardent love of rural sports, and all manly and robust exercises. I need not remind you how many animated pictures they have given of the chase in almost all its varieties. Stag-hunting*, and the dangerous pastime of the *tinchel*†; the chase of the fox, both on horseback, and in the Liddesdale fashion, on foot‡; and the picturesque 'salmon-hunt' by

* See particularly, The Lady of the Lake, Canto I. St. 1 to 10; and the Bride of Lammermoor, vol. i. ch. 8.

† Waverley, vol. ii. ch. 1.

‡ Rob Roy, vol. i. ch. 5, 7. Guy Mannering, vol. ii. ch. 4.

torch-light*, are described sometimes with the technical minuteness, but always with the enthusiasm of a sworn sportsman. The words and phrases appropriate to these and other sylvan exercises, are continually used with an almost ostentatious familiarity: and the qualities of dogs and horses are touched upon with as much liveliness and discrimination as if the novelist or the poet had never felt an interest in any other object.

But the importance given to the canine race in these works ought to be noted as a characteristic feature by itself. I have seen some drawings by a Swiss artist, who was called the Raphael of cats; and either of the writers before us might by a similar phrase be called the Wilkie of dogs. Is it necessary to justify such a compliment by examples? Call Yarrow, or Lufra, or poor Fangs, Colonel Mannering's Plato, Henry Morton's Elphin, or Hobbie Elliot's Killbuck, or Wolf of Avenel Castle;—see Fitz-James's hounds returning from the pursuit of the lost stag—

"Back limped with slow and crippled pace
The sulky leaders of the chase—"

Lady of the Lake, Canto I. St. 10.

or swimming after the boat which carries their Master—

"With heads erect and whimpering cry
The hounds behind their passage ply."

Ibid. St. 24.

See Captain Clutterbuck's dog *quizzing* him when he missed a bird†, or the scene of "mutual explanation" and

* Guy Mannering, vol. ii. ch. 5. And see Miscellaneous Poems, Edinburgh, 1820. p. 153. † Monastery, Introduction.

'remonstrance' between 'the venerable patriarchs old Pepper and Mustard,' and Henry Bertram's rough terrier Wasp*. If these instances are not sufficient, turn to the English blood-hound, assailing the young Buccleugh—

"And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
Comes nigher still and nigher;
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wildered child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
* * * *
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
* * * *
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
But still in act to spring."

Lay of the last Minstrel, Canto III. St. 15.

Or Lord Ronald's deer-hounds, in the haunted forest of Glenfinlas:

"Within an hour return'd each hound;
In rush'd the rouzers of the deer;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch beside the seer.
No Ronald yet; though midnight came—
* * * *
Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl;
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs, and stifled growl.

* Guy Mannering, vol. ii. ch. 3.

'Untouch'd, the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door,' &c.
Glenfinlas, *Border Minstrelsy*, Vol. III, Part 3.

or look at Cedric the Saxon, in his antique hall, attended by his grey-hounds and slow-hounds, and the terriers which 'waited with impatience the arrival of the supper; but 'with the sagacious knowledge of physiognomy peculiar to 'their race, forbore to intrude upon the moody silence of 'their master.' To complete the picture, 'One grisly old 'wolf-dog alone, with the liberty of an indulged favourite, 'had planted himself close by the chair of state, and occa-'sionally ventured to solicit notice by putting his large hairy 'head upon his master's knee, or pushing his nose into his 'hand. Even he was repelled by the stern command, ''Down, Balder, down! I am not in the humour for 'foolery *.''

Another animated sketch occurs in the way of simile.

'The interview between Ratcliffe and Sharpitlaw had an 'aspect different from all these. They sate for five minutes 'silent, on opposite sides of a small table, and looked fixedly 'at each other, with a sharp, knowing, and alert cast of 'countenance, not unmingled with an inclination to laugh, 'and resembled, more than any thing else, two dogs, who, 'preparing for a game at romps, are seen to couch down, 'and remain in that posture for a little time, watching each 'other's movements, and waiting which shall begin the 'game †.'

Let me point out a still more amusing study of canine life: 'While the Antiquary was in full declamation, Juno, 'who held him in awe, according to the remarkable instinct

* Ivanhoe, vol. i. ch. 3.

† Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. ii. ch. 4.

'by which dogs instantly discover those who like or dislike 'them, had peeped several times into the room, and, 'encountering nothing very forbidding in his aspect, had 'at length presumed to introduce her full person; and 'finally, becoming bold by impunity, she actually ate up 'Mr. Oldbuck's toast, as, looking first at one, then at 'another of his audience, he repeated with self-compla- 'cence,

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,—"

''You remember the passage in the Fatal Sisters, which, 'by the way, is not so fine as in the original—But, hey-day! 'my toast has vanished! I see which way—Ah, thou type 'of womankind, no wonder they take offence at thy generic 'appellation!'—(So saying, he shook his fist at Juno, who 'scoured out of the parlour.)'—*Antiquary*, Vol. III. Ch. 1.

In short, throughout these works, wherever it is possible for a dog to contribute in any way to the effect of a scene, we find there the very dog that was required, in his proper place and attitude. In Branksome Hall, when the feast was over,

"The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor;
And urged, in dreams, the forest race
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor."

Lay of the last Minstrel, Canto I. St. 2.

The gentle Margaret, when she steals secretly from the castle,

"Pats the shaggy blood-hound
As he rouses him up from his lair."

Ibid. Canto II. St. 26.

When Waverley visits the Baron of Bradwardine, in his concealment at Janet Gellatley's, Ban and Buscar play their parts in every point with perfect discretion; and in the joyous company that assembles at Little-Veolan, on the Baron's enlargement, these honest animals are found 'stuffed to the throat with food, in the liberality of Macwheeble's joy,' and 'snoring on the floor*.' In the perilous adventure of Henry Bertram, at Portanferry gaol, the action would lose half its interest, without the by-play of little Wasp†. At the funeral ceremony of Duncraggan (in the Lady of the Lake), a principal mourner is

"Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed;
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew."

Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 17.

Ellen Douglas smiled (or did not smile).

"—— to see the stately drake,
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed spaniel, from the beach,
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach."

Ibid. Canto II. St. 5.

I will close this growing catalogue of examples with one of the most elegant descriptions that ever sprang from a poet's fancy:

"Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,

* Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 15, 18.

† Guy Mannering, vol. iii. ch. 9.

"The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly."

Lady of the Lake, Canto II. St. 24.

To return from this digression, and resume the subject of manly exercises. The ancient pastime of archery is described in the novels and poems with great liveliness and precision. We are presented, in Ivanhoe, with a somewhat elaborate account of a match at quarter-staff*. The most difficult evolutions of horsemanship are treated of with familiarity, and often in the appropriate technical terms; and they every where furnish abundance of spirited and picturesque description. The admirable management of the single combats (it is enough to mention those of Fitz-James with Roderic Dhu †, of Rashleigh with Francis Osbaldistone ‡, and of Glendinning with sir Piercie Shafton §), implies more than a novice's acquaintance with the use of the sword. Neither the poet nor the novelist makes a frequent parade of nautical science; but when the sail is spread to the sea-breeze, or the oar dips lightly into a glassy

* Vol. i. ch. 11.
† Lady of the Lake, Canto V. St. 14 to 16.
‡ Rob Roy, vol. ii. ch. 12.
§ Monastery, vol. ii. ch. 7.

lake, both writers appear to enter on an old and well-known scene of hardy enjoyment. And 'for the land service,' let me refer you to one passage, apparently written with the warmth of pleasurable recollection. 'Dr. Johnson thought 'life had few things better than the excitation produced by 'being whirled rapidly along in a post-chaise; but he who 'has in youth experienced the confident and independent 'feeling of a stout pedestrian in an interesting country, and 'during fine weather, will hold the taste of the great moralist 'cheap in comparison.'—*Guy Mannering*, vol. II. ch. 1.

It is not to be inferred from passages of this nature that their authors have actually engaged in all the sports and attained proficiency in all the exercises described; but on the other hand it cannot be believed that either the novels or the poems were composed by any person who had not in the course of his past life acquired some practical knowledge of sylvan and athletic sports, and entered into them with enthusiasm. The author of Marmion has given frequent intimations of his ardent and long-cherished attachment to these pursuits. In the introductory epistles annexed to that poem, he asks of one friend,

> "Remember'st thou my grey-hounds true?
> O'er holt, or hill, there never flew
> From slip, or leash, there never sprang
> More fleet of foot, or sure of fang."
>
> Introduction to Canto II.

He reminds another of the time when

> "Riding side by side, our hand
> First drew the voluntary brand;"

('the days,' I presume, 'of the zealous volunteer service,'

mentioned by the author of Waverley, 'when the bar-gown of our pleaders was often flung over a blazing uniform*,' the time when

> "Grave discourse might intervene—
> Of the good horse that bore him best,
> His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest:
> For, like mad Tom's, our chiefest care
> Was horse to ride, and weapon wear."
>
> Introduction to Canto IV.

And in one of his minor poems, 'written,' as he says, 'after a week's shooting and fishing,' he celebrates with enthusiasm the hardy sports of Ettrick Forest†.

Their passion for martial subjects, and their success in treating them, form a conspicuous point of resemblance between the novelist and poet. No writer has appeared in our age (and few have ever existed) who could vie with the author of Marmion in describing battles and marches, and all the terrible grandeur of war, except the author of Waverley. Nor is there any man of original genius and powerful inventive talent as conversant with the military character, and as well schooled in tactics as the author of Waverley, except the author of Marmion. Both seem to exult in camps, and to warm at the approach of a soldier. In every warlike scene that awes and agitates, or dazzles and inspires, the poet triumphs; but where any effect is to be produced by dwelling on the minutiæ of military habits and discipline, or exhibiting the blended hues of individual humour and professional peculiarity, as they present themselves

* Waverley, vol. i. ch. 10.

† Miscellaneous Poems. Edinburgh, 1820. Page 153.

in the mess-room or the guard-room, every advantage is on the side of the novelist. I might illustrate this position by tracing all the gradations of character marked out in the novels, from the Baron of Bradwardine to Tom Halliday: but the examples are too well known to require enumeration, and too generally admired to stand in need of panegyric.

Both writers, then, must have bestowed a greater attention on military subjects, and have mixed more frequently in the society of soldiers, than is usual with persons not educated to the profession of arms. And without presuming to inquire into the private connexions and intimacies of our admired lyric poet, I may at least observe that the rich and animated pictures of martial life in Old Mortality and the Legend of Montrose, are exactly such as might have been expected from a man of genius, who had recently conversed with the triumphant warriors of Waterloo on the field of their achievements, and commemorated those achievements both in verse and in prose *.

It may be asked why we should take for granted that the writer of these novels is not himself a member of the military profession? The conjecture is a little improbable if we have been right in concluding that the minuteness and multiplicity of our author's legal details are the fruit of his own study and practice; although the same person may certainly, at different periods of life, put on the helmet and the wig, the gorget and the band; attend courts and lie in trenches,

* It may not perhaps be strictly justifiable to assume without argument, that Paul's Letters and the Field of Waterloo are written by the same author; but the illustrations to be drawn from the Letters are so few, and comparatively unimportant, that I have not thought it necessary to trouble you with any preliminary discussion on this point.

head a charge and lead a cause. I cannot help suspecting, however, (it is with the greatest diffidence I venture the remark), that in those warlike recitals which so strongly interest the great body of readers, an army critic would discover several particulars that savour more of the amateur than of the practised campaigner. It is not from any technical improprieties (if such exist) that I derive this observation, but, on the contrary, from a too great minuteness and over curious diligence, at times perceptible in the military details; which, amidst a seeming fluency and familiarity, betray, I think, here and there, the lurking vestiges of labour and contrivance, like the marks of pick-axes in an artificial grotto. The accounts of operations in the field, if not more circumstantial than a professional author would have made them, are occasionally circumstantial on points which such an author would have thought it idle to dwell upon. A writer who derived his knowledge of war from experience would, no doubt, like the author of Waverley, delight in shaping out imaginary manœuvres, or in filling up the traditional outline of those martial enterprizes and conflicts, which have found a place in history; perhaps, too, he would dwell on these parts of his narrative a little longer than was strictly necessary. But in describing (for example) the advance of a party of soldiers, threatened by an ambuscade, he would scarcely think it worth while to relate at large that the captain 'reformed 'his line of march, commanded his soldiers to unsling their 'firelocks and fix their bayonets, and formed an advanced 'and rear-guard, each consisting of a non-commissioned 'officer and two privates, who received strict orders to keep 'an alert look-out:' or that when the enemy appeared, 'he 'ordered the rear-guard to join the centre, and both to close 'up to the advance, doubling his files, so as to occupy with

'his column the whole practicable part of the road,' &c.* Again, in representing a defeated corps retiring and pressed by the enemy, he would probably never think of recording (as our novelist does in his incomparable narrative of the engagement at Drumclog†) that the commanding officer gave such directions as these—'Let Allan form the regi-'ment, and do you two retreat up the hill in two bodies, 'each halting alternately as the other falls back. I'll keep 'the rogues in check with the rear-guard, making a stand 'and facing from time to time.' I do not offer these observations for the purpose of depreciating a series of military pictures, which have never been surpassed in richness, animation, and distinctness; I will own, too, that such details as I have pointed out are the fittest that could be selected for the generality of novel-readers; I merely contend that a writer practically acquainted with war would either have passed over these circumstances as too common to require particular mention, or if he had thought it necessary to enlarge upon these, would have dwelt with proportionate minuteness on incidents of a less ordinary kind, which the recollections of a soldier would have readily supplied, and his imagination would have rested on with complacency. He would, in short, have left as little undone for the military, as the present author has for the legal part of his narratives. But the most ingenious writer, who attempts to discourse with technical familiarity on arts or pursuits with which he is not habitually conversant, will too surely fall into a superfluous particularity on common and trivial points, proportioned to his deficiency in those

* Rob Roy, vol. iii. ch. 3.

† Tales of my Landlord, First Series, vol. iii. ch. 3.

nicer details which imply practical knowledge. I cannot better illustrate this remark than by quoting the description of a fox-chase given by an excellent writer, but a lady, who probably never made her observations on this exercise in person.

'Count O'Halloran now turned the conversation to field-sports, and then the captain and major opened at once.

'"Pray now, sir?" said the major, "you fox-hunt in this country, I suppose; and now do you manage the thing here as we do? Over night, you know, before the hunt, when the fox is out, stopping up the earths of the cover we mean to draw, and all the rest for four miles round. Next morning we assemble at the cover's side, and the huntsman throws in the hounds. The gossip here is no small part of the entertainment: but a s soon as we hear the hounds give tongue—"

'"The favourite hounds," interposed Williamson.—"The favourite hounds, to be sure," continued Benson; "there is a dead silence, till pug is well out of cover, and the whole pack well in; then cheer the hounds with tally-ho! till your lungs crack. Away he goes in gallant style, and the whole field is hard up, till pug takes a stiff country: then they who haven't pluck lag, see no more of him, and, with a fine blazing scent, there are but few of us in at the death."

'"Well, we are fairly in at the death, I hope," said Lady Dashfort: "I was thrown out sadly at one time in the chase."'—*Tales of Fashionable Life. Absentee*, ch. 8.

In this description all the circumstances are (as far as I know) correctly given, and the phrases properly applied; the whole has no doubt been compiled with great care, and I cannot find that the writer has omitted any material part

of the transaction, except perhaps that the horses are previously saddled and bridled. But is it not morally impossible that any real sportsman could have prevailed upon himself thus to write down the commonest incidents, the merest matters of course in a day's fox-hunting, with all the studious formality of a traveller describing the chase of a rhinoceros? This impropriety is the more glaring in the passage just quoted, as the recital is supposed to be made by a sportsman, and to a person apparently well acquainted with rural diversions. Where the novelist addresses himself directly to his reader, as in the first two examples from the author of Waverley, he may stand excused for being a little too explicit; but the same inference may be drawn in both cases with respect to his personal experience.

The technical allusions with which this writer has adorned the conversation of his soldiers, particularly in Old Mortality, are open to a similar reproach. They have an artificial, studied air, the more remarkable as the dialogues in which they occur are in other respects very natural and characteristic. 'A fair challenge, by Jove, and from two 'at once, but it's not easy to bang the soldier with his bandeliers.' 'Halt a bit, halt a bit, rein up and parley, Jenny.' 'If Claverhouse hears what I have done, he will build me 'a horse as high as the Tower of Tillietudlem.' 'And if 'I were trusting to you, you little jilting devil, I should 'lose both pains and powder.' 'But be ready, when I call 'at the door, to start, as if they were sounding 'horse and 'away*.'' These and other such phrases are dealt out, I think, with a quaintness hardly befitting the characters to which they are assigned; they appear 'thinly scattered to 'make up a show,' neither stealing from the author's pen

* Tales of my Landlord, First Series, vol. ii. ch. 10.

like involuntary escapes of a lurking professional pedantry, nor crowding on his page, like the salt-water rhetoric of Smollett's sailors, with a broad luxuriance and overwhelming profusion, which defy all criticism, and exclude every doubt of the writer having 'learned his lore *,' by early and continued lessons in the school of actual life.

* Milton.

LETTER III.

Scindit se nubes, et in æthera purgat apertum,
Restitit Æneas, claraque in luce refulsit.
Virg. Æn. I. 591, 2.

The prince of darkness is a gentleman.
King Lear, Act III. Sc. 4.

Another point of resemblance between the author of Waverley and him of Flodden Field is, that both are unquestionably men of good society. Of the anonymous writer I infer this from his works; of the poet it is unnecessary to deduce such a character from his writings, because they are not anonymous. I am the more inclined to dwell upon this merit in the novelist, on account of its rarity; for among the whole multitude of authors, well or ill educated, who devote themselves to poetry or to narrative or dramatic fiction, how few there are who give any proof in their works, of the refined taste, the instinctive sense of propriety, the clear spirit of honour, nay, of the familiar acquaintance with conventional forms of good breeding, which are essential to the character of a gentleman! Even of the small number who, in a certain degree, possess these qualifications, how rarely do we find one who can so conduct his fable, and so order his dialogue throughout, that nothing shall be found either repugnant to honourable feelings or inconsistent with polished manners! How constantly, even in the best works of fiction, are we disgusted with such offences against all generous principle, as the reading of letters by those for whom they were not intended; taking advantage of accidents to overhear private conversa-

tion; revealing what in honour should have remained secret; plotting against men as enemies, and at the same time making use of their services; dishonest practices on the passions or sensibilities of women by their admirers; falsehoods, not always indirect; and an endless variety of low artifices, which appear to be thought quite legitimate if carried on through subordinate agents. And all these knaveries are assigned to characters which the reader is expected to honour with his sympathy, or at least to receive into favour before the story concludes.

The sins against propriety in manners are as frequent and as glaring. I do not speak of the hoyden vivacity, harlot tenderness, and dancing-school affability, with which vulgar novel-writers always deck out their countesses and principessas, chevaliers, dukes, and marquisses; but it would be easy to produce, from authors of a better class, abundant instances of bookish and laborious pleasantry, of pert and insipid gossip or mere slang, the wrecks, perhaps, of an obsolete fashionable dialect, set down as the brilliant conversation of a witty and elegant society: incredible outrages on the common decorum of life, represented as traits of eccentric humour; familiar raillery pushed to downright rudeness; affectation or ill-breeding over-coloured so as to become insupportable insolence; extravagant rants on the most delicate topics indulged in before all the world; expressions freely interchanged between gentlemen, which, by the customs of that class, are neither used nor tolerated; and quarrels carried on most bombastically and abusively, even to mortal defiance, without a thought bestowed upon the numbers, sex, nerves, or discretion of the bystanders.

You will perceive that in recapitulating the offences of other writers, I have pronounced an indirect eulogium on the author of Waverley. No man, I think, has a clearer

view of what is just and honourable in principle and conduct, or possesses in a higher degree that elegant taste, and that chivalrous generosity of feeling, which, united with exact judgment, give an author the power of comprehending and expressing, not merely the right and fit, but the graceful and exalted in human action. As an illustration of these remarks, a somewhat homely one perhaps, let me call to your recollection the incident, so wild and extravagant in itself, of Sir Piercie Shafton's elopement with the miller's daughter*. In the address and feeling with which the author has displayed the high-minded delicacy of Queen Elizabeth's courtier to the unguarded village nymph, in his brief reflections arising out of this part of the narrative, and indeed in his whole conception and management of the adventure, I do not know whether the moralist or the gentleman is most to be admired: it is impossible to praise too warmly either the sound taste, or the virtuous sentiment which have imparted so much grace and interest to such a hazardous episode.

It may, I think, be generally affirmed, on a review of all the six and thirty volumes, in which this author has related the adventures of some twenty or more heroes and heroines (without counting second-rate personages) that there is not an unhandsome action or degrading sentiment recorded of any person who is recommended to the full esteem of the reader. To be blameless on this head is one of the strongest proofs a writer can give of honourable principles implanted by education and refreshed by good society.

The correctness in morals is scarcely more remarkable than the refinement and propriety in manners, by which

* Monastery, vol. iii. ch. 3, 4.

these novels are distinguished. Where the character of a gentleman is introduced, we generally find it supported without affectation or constraint, and often with so much truth, animation, and dignity, that we forget ourselves into a longing to behold and converse with the accomplished creature of imagination. It is true that the volatile and elegant man of wit and pleasure, and the gracefully fantastic petite-maitresse, are a species of character scarcely ever attempted, and even the few sketches we meet with in this style are not worthy of so great a master. But the aristocratic country gentleman, the ancient lady of quality, the gallant cavalier, the punctilious young soldier, and the jocund veteran, whose high mind is mellowed, not subdued by years, are drawn with a matchless vigour, grace, and refinement. There is, in all these creations, a spirit of gentility, not merely of that negative kind which avoids giving offence, but of a strong, commanding, and pervading quality, blending unimpaired with the richest humour and wildest eccentricity, and communicating an interest and an air of originality to characters which, without it, would be wearisome and insipid, or would fade into common-place. In Waverley, for example, if it were not for this powerful charm, the severe but warm-hearted Major Melville and the generous Colonel Talbot would become mere ordinary machines for carrying on the plot, and Sir Everard, the hero of an episode* that might be coveted by Mackenzie, would encounter the frowns of every impatient reader, for unprofitably retarding the story at its first outset.

But without dwelling on minor instances, I will refer you at once to the character of Colonel Mannering, as one of the most striking representations I am acquainted with,

* Vol. i. ch. 2.

of a gentleman in feelings and in manners, in habits, taste, predilections; nay, if the expression may be ventured, a gentleman even in prejudices, passions, and caprices. Had it been less than all I have described; had any refinement, any nicety of touch been wanting, the whole portrait must have been coarse, common, and repulsive, hardly distinguishable from the moody father and domineering chieftain of every hackneyed romance-writer. But it was no vulgar hand that drew the lineaments of Colonel Mannering: no ordinary mind could have conceived that exquisite combination of sternness and sensibility, injurious haughtiness and chivalrous courtesy; the promptitude, decision, and imperious spirit of a military disciplinarian; the romantic caprices of an untameable enthusiast; generosity impatient of limit or impediment; pride scourged but not subdued by remorse; and a cherished philosophical severity, maintaining ineffectual conflicts with native tenderness and constitutional irritability. Supposing that it had entered into the thoughts of an inferior writer to describe a temper of mind at once impetuous, kind, arrogant, affectionate, stern, sensitive, deliberate, fanciful; supposing even that he had had the skill to combine these different qualities harmoniously and naturally, yet how could he have attained the Shaksperian felicity of those delicate and unambitious touches, by which this author shapes and chisels out individual character from general nature, and imparts a distinct personality to the creature of his invention?

Such are (for example) the slight tinge of superstition, contracted by the romantic young Astrologer in his adventure at Ellangowan, not wholly effaced in maturer life, and extending itself by contagion to the mind of his daughter*; his mysterious longing, after many eventful years, to

* Vol. i. ch. 17.

revisit the scene of his youthful prophecy*; his elegant accomplishments, concealed with haughty shyness from the observation of his subalterns in the Indian garrison †; and the mixture of pride, caprice, and generosity, which would not permit even a mis-shapen dog to be treated with ridicule, when he had taken it under his protection ‡. Add to these instances, the well painted triumph of nervous impatience over dignity and self-control, when the Colonel is expecting his unknown visitors from Portanferry.

He 'had given some directions to his confidential servant. 'When he returned, his absence of mind, and an unusual ex-'pression of thought and anxiety upon his features, struck the 'ladies whom he joined in the drawing-room. Mannering 'was not, however, a man to be questioned, even by those 'whom he most loved, upon the mental agitation which 'these signs expressed. The hour of tea arrived, and the 'party were partaking of that refreshment in silence, when 'a carriage drove up to the door, and the bell announced 'the arrival of a visitor. 'Surely,' said Mannering, 'it 'is too soon by some hours.'—'While the old gentleman, 'pleased with Miss Mannering's liveliness and attention, 'rattled away for her amusement and his own, the impa-'tience of Colonel Mannering began to exceed all bounds. 'He declined sitting down at table under pretence that he 'never eat supper; and traversed the parlour in which they 'were, with hasty and impatient steps, now throwing up 'the window to gaze upon the dark lawn, now listening for 'the remote sound of the carriage advancing up the avenue. 'At length, in a feeling of uncontroulable impatience, he 'left the room, took his hat and cloak, and pursued his 'walk up the avenue, as if his so doing would hasten the

* Vol. i. ch. 19. † Ibid, ch. 21. ‡ Vol. ii. ch. 8.

'approach of those whom he desired to see.'—Vol. III. c. 10.

It is by the repetition of such strokes as these, refined, yet simple, unforeseen, yet obviously natural, and appearing, when once observed, inseparable from the character, that fictitious portraits assume an air of biographical truth: thus it is that the heroes of Shakspeare present themselves to our minds, and are referred to in conversation, not as specimens of a class, as tyrants, soldiers, philosophers, but as individual persons, Macbeth or John, Caius Marcius or Hotspur, Jaques or Hamlet.

To connect these remarks with that part of the subject from which they have a little diverged; although the character of Colonel Mannering is traced with so much energy and minuteness, and distinguished by so many well-conceived peculiarities, it is always dignified and commanding, and he presents himself under every circumstance with the undoubted demeanour of a gentleman. Indeed, I think, a reference to acknowledged models will warrant the remark, that it is not possible to present any lively representation of gentlemanly character, unless the picture of the man also be highly finished, and enriched with those natural touches which give determinate expression, and the effect of reality. Hence it is that in many novels and plays of considerable merit, the polite and dignified personages are looked upon with indifference by the reader, not from any want of elegance, but from the vagueness and insipid generality with which they are delineated, conveying no idea of any positive quality, and furnishing no point upon which the imagination can lay hold. The character I have thus long dwelt upon is displayed in such frequent and vigorous action, and under so many powerful impulses as to awaken the strongest interest, and yet never loses in elevation or refinement what

it gains in energy: the matured military gentleman is still present to our minds, nay, the image is more distinct, when Mannering, with generous indignation, and eyes that 'flash 'dark light,' threatens the robust and insolent lawyer to hurl him at one step down Ellangowan terrace, if he continue to affront his dying benefactor*; when he humours the quaint frolic of Paulus Pleydell and his companions, at 'High Jinks;†' and even in that moment of exquisite embarrassment, when, confronted in his own house by the injured cadet Brown, returned, as it seems, from an untimely foreign grave, he struggles 'between his high sense of 'courtesy and hospitality, his joy at finding himself relieved 'from the guilt of having shed life in a private quarrel, and 'the former feelings of dislike and prejudice, which revive 'in his haughty mind at the sight of the object against whom 'he once 'entertained them.‡'

To the review I have taken of this author's merits as a writer of good society, it is only necessary to add, that when he brings upon the scene any dignified or illustrious personage, already celebrated in history or tradition, the character is almost always supported with the propriety, good taste, and knowledge of the world, displayed on similar occasions by the author of Marmion. Both are equally fond of gracing their stories with distinguished names, and both usually avoid with great discretion the two opposite faults which alike betray the uninformed or injudicious writer, when he ventures on this lofty ground, formality and coarseness. They do not, on the one hand, 'tickle ye for a young prince, i'faith,' in Falstaff's mode§, or assign to a monarch and his courtiers the colloquial and practical jests of a party of reapers at

* Vol. i. ch. 13. † Vol. ii. ch. 15. ‡ Vol. iii. ch. 11.
§ First Part of Henry IV. Act. II. Sc. 4.

harvest-home, like an author in many instances admirable, in some unique, but palpably mistaken in this particular, the Ettrick Shepherd: nor, on the contrary, do they put humanity out of countenance with those demure, gracefully-bowing, languidly-smiling, old-maidish automatons, which lady-novelists delight in as the beau idéal of princely gallantry; or with the quaint, moody, striding, motioning, cloudy-fronted fantoccini that domineer at Hookham's and Colburn's, under the names of renowned sovereigns, sages, captains, and politicians. In the tales now before us, historical characters do not appear, as in other works of the kind, perpetually fluttered with a consciousness of their own importance, and oppressed with anticipations of the figure they are to make in Froissart or Monstrelet, in Brantome or Davila or Thuanus. They are not, in short, represented conformably to the instructions of M. De Piles to portrait-painters, in a passage which appears to have been assiduously studied by many of our historical romance-writers.

'Il faut que les portraits semblent nous parler d'eux 'mêmes, et nous dire, par exemple: Tien, regarde moi, 'je suis ce Roi invincible environné de majesté. Je suis ce 'valeureux Capitaine qui porte la terreur par tout, ou bien 'qui ai fait voir par ma bonne conduite tant de glorieux suc-'cès: je suis ce grand Ministre qui ai connu tous les ressorts 'de la politique: je suis ce Magistrat d'une sagesse et d'une 'integrité consommée: je suis cet homme de lettres tout ab-'sorbé dans les sciences: je suis cet homme sage et tran-'quille que l'amour de la philosophie a mis au dessus des 'désirs et de l'ambition: je suis ce Prélat pieux, docte, vi-'gilant: je suis ce Protecteur des beaux arts, cet amateur 'de la vertu: je suis cet artisan fameux, cet unique dans 'ma profession, &c. Et pour les femmes: je suis cette sage 'Princesse dont le grand air inspire du respect et de la con-

'fiance: je suis cette Dame fière, dont les manières grandes 'attirent de l'estime, &c. Je suis cette Dame vertueuse, 'douce, modeste, &c. Je suis cette Dame enjouée qui 'n'aime que les ris, la joie, &c. Ainsi du reste.'—*Cours de Peinture par Principes. Composé par M. De Piles.* Paris. 1708. P. 279.

I have now pointed out all the instances that appear to me most remarkable, of a correspondence between the style and sentiments of these novels, and the known habits, circumstances, and qualities, of the author of Marmion. There remains, however, one fact to be noticed, which, even if unconnected with any point in the poet's individual character, would yet, on the general principles of human action, accord so precisely with the supposition of his being the unknown novelist, that I cannot forbear adding it to the already adduced proofs. How is it to be explained, that the author of Waverley has taken occasion in his writings to make honourable mention of almost every distinguished contemporary poet, except the Minstrel of the Border? The answer is obvious; he could not do so, because he was himself that author: and a man of ingenuous mind will shrink from publishing a direct commendation of his own talent, although he may feel confident that the eulogy will never be traced home. It would be endless to enumerate particularly the extracts from living poets, and the allusions to their writings, which abound in almost all the novels: Campbell, 'the Bard of Hope*,' is frequently quoted; Lord Byron, more than once†; 'honest Crabbe,' 'our moral

* Mentioned by that name in the Bride of Lammermoor, vol. i. ch. 8.

† Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. iii. ch. 3; Old Mortality, last vol. ch. 7.

'teacher,' 'our English Juvenal*,' is perpetually appealed to, and with manifest fondness; James Hogg contributes a stanza†; several verses are borrowed from Wordsworth, and one passage in his Ballads is pointed out as containing a beautiful expression of feeling‡; Coleridge is often cited, and is distinguished by name as 'the most imaginative of 'our modern bards §;' 'he of the laurel wreath ||,' receives a tribute of deserved admiration, and Joanna Baillie, 'our 'immortal Joanna Baillie ¶,' is spoken of with a mixture of literary and national enthusiasm, as honourable to the man of taste and feeling, as characteristic of the true-hearted Caledonian **. Yet, strange to say, neither national affection, nor admiration of a genius, at least not inferior to the brightest our generation has produced, nor the necessary sympathy between two minds exactly similar in constitution and habits, engrossed with the same objects, and devoted to the same pursuits, has induced the novelist in any part of his works to bestow a single complimentary phrase upon the author of Marmion. Once, indeed, in the title-page of Guy Mannering, we are presented with four uninteresting lines, said to be taken from the Lay of the Last Minstrel;

* Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. i. ch. 1; Monastery, vol. iii. ch. 3; Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 22; Guy Mannering, vol. i. c. 20.

† Antiquary, vol. iii. ch. 16.

‡ Ibid. vol. i. ch. 10; and see Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. iii. ch. 2.

§ Monastery, vol. i. ch. 11.

|| Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. iv. ch. 4.

¶ Bride of Lammermoor, vol. ii. ch. 8.

** I do not know who is the poet so highly complimented in Guy Mannering (vol. i. ch. 3), since our author has in this, as in some other instances, lent his countenance to the modern bad practice of using quotations without furnishing references.

and once in the same novel*, and again in the Introduction to the Monastery †, that poem is drily, not to say ungraciously, alluded to; but the writer is never mentioned by name. This is the more remarkable, as there does not exist a poet whose works would have supplied quotations more congenial to the spirit, and germane to the business of almost every chapter in these novels. Surely, Marmion, and Rokeby, and Don Roderick, and the Lady of the Lake, might occasionally have contributed a verse, if it had been only to save the too frequent draught upon that well-written, but very didactic 'Old Play,' which appears to be (as M. Brisac says in Fletcher's Elder Brother),

> ——— "A general collection
> Of all the quiddits from Adam to this time."
>
> Act. I. Sc. 2.

The same shy or fastidious feeling seems to prevail with the author of Paul's Letters, when, after obtaining from his great poetical contemporary a translation of the insipid Romance of Dunois, he cavalierly designates him as "one of our Scottish men of rhyme ‡:" a mode of description scarcely less improper than if, in relating the conflict at Quatre Bras, he had mentioned the 42d Highlanders, as 'some Scotch foot in blue and green draperies.'

This cautious and reserved spirit may again be traced in the observations which were prefixed to the Bridal of Triermain, when its author was desirous of concealment. 'It is 'not in this place,' he says, 'that an examination of the 'works of the master whom he has here adopted as his 'model can, with propriety, be introduced, since his gene-

* Vol. ii. ch. 5. † Letter from Captain Clutterbuck.
‡ Ninth Letter.

'ral acquiescence in the favourable suffrage of the public 'must necessarily be inferred from the attempt he has now 'made.' He offers some remarks on Romantic Poetry, 'the popularity of which has been revived in the present 'day, under the auspices, and by the unparalleled success, of 'one individual.'

In the Epistle Dedicatory to Ivanhoe, Mr. Lawrence Templeton speaks with yet greater coolness of the novelist in whose steps he professes to tread; observing, that he has supplied his own 'indolence or poverty of invention' by incidents which have actually taken place; and pronouncing him to have 'derived from his works fully more credit and 'profit than the facility of his labours merited.' But Jedediah Cleishbotham was a still bolder man; for he, when willing to dissemble his identity with the author of Waverley, at once denounced that writer as 'I know not what inditer of vain fables; who hath cumbered the world with his devices, but shrunken from the responsibility thereof*. Truly, as the sapient Bridoison says, 'On peut se dire à soi-'même ce-es sortes de choses là, mais—i-ils ne sont pas polis 'du tout da-ans cet endroit ci.'—*Mariage de Figaro*, Acte III. Sc. 20.

I think, then, that in the deportment of our mysterious novelist toward his honoured contemporary, we may discover the natural, and (as appears from the instances I have given), accustomed policy of an author forsaking an old character, and provoking public curiosity in a new. One, who is thus situated, may innocently, nay becomingly, treat his other self with a cynical indifference, which, if manifested toward a brother in literature, would be justly blamed as harsh and uncandid.

* Prolegomen to the Heart of Mid Lothian.

Let me now, Sir, entreat you to review at one glance the various points of coincidence apparent in the characters and habits of these two eminent writers. Both are natives of Scotland; both familiar from of old with her romantic metropolis; both Lowlanders, though accustomed to Highland manners and scenery; both are poets; both are deeply conversant with those parts of our national literature, which contain the materials of British history; and both enjoy more, perhaps, than an amateur's acquaintance with ancient classics. Both, if I mistake not, are lawyers by profession, yet both equally delight in military subjects, and excel in martial descriptions, and the delineation of soldierly character. Both are evidently gentlemen, and frequenters of the best society. The novelist is a devoted antiquary, so is the poet; 'go to, then, there's sympathy:' one is a bibliomaniac—the other reveres scarce books; 'Ha, ha! then 'there's more sympathy;' each is a cultivator of German and Spanish literature—'would you desire better sympathy*? The same taste for every manly exercise and rural sport characterises the versatile pair; I would warrant each well qualified to judge

"Between two hawks, which flies the higher pitch,
Between two dogs, which hath the deeper mouth,
Between two blades, which bears the better temper,
Between two horses, which doth bear him best,
Between two girls, which hath the merriest eye."

though neither, I am sure, could add the protestation—

"But in these nice sharp quillets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw."
First Part of Henry VI. Act II. Sc. 4.

* Merry Wives of Windsor, Act II. Sc. 1.

Are we then to conclude, that this extraordinary agreement in so many and such various particulars amounts only to a casual resemblance between distinct individuals? Can there exist authors so precisely the counterpart of each other? Must we imagine,

"Et solem geminum, et duplices se ostendere Thebas?*"

O wonderful bard! and O still more amazing writer of romance!

> "How have you made division of yourself?—
> An apple cleft in two is not more twin
> Than these two creatures."
>
> *Twelfth Night*, Act V. Sc. 1.

* Virg. Æn. IV. 470.

LETTER IV.

Non, à d'autres, dit-il; on connoît votre style.
Boileau, Ep. VI.

From the attributes and qualities of the authors, let us now turn to those of the works themselves, and observe what inferences are suggested by a comparative review of both collections, beginning with their broadest and most general characteristics, and proceeding gradually to their minutest peculiarities. The subject is a copious, and to me a very engaging one; but I hope to use such diligence in selecting and compressing, as may save me from the blame of having presumed too far on your indulgent attention.

All the productions I am acquainted with, both of the poet and of the prose writer, recommend themselves by a native piety and goodness, not generally predominant in modern works of imagination; and which, where they do appear, are too often disfigured by eccentricity, pretension, or bad taste. In the works before us there is a constant tendency to promote the desire of excellence in ourselves, and the love of it in our neighbours, by making us think honourably of our general nature. Whatever kindly or charitable affection, whatever principle of manly and honest ambition exists within us is roused and stimulated by the perusal of these writings; our passions are won to the cause of justice, purity, and self-denial; and the old, indissoluble ties that bind us to country, kindred, and birth-place, appear to strengthen as we read, and brace themselves more firmly about the heart and imagination. Both writers,

although peculiarly happy in their conception of all chivalrous and romantic excellencies, are still more distinguished by their deep and true feeling and expressive delineation of the graces and virtues proper to domestic life. The gallant, elevated, and punctilious character which a Frenchman contemplates in speaking of 'un honnête homme,' is singularly combined, in these authors, with the genial, homely good qualities that win from a Caledonian the exclamation of "honest man!" But the crown of their merits, as virtuous and moral writers, is the manly and exemplary spirit with which, upon all seasonable occasions, they pay honour and homage to religion, ascribing to it its just pre-eminence among the causes of human happiness, and dwelling on it as the only certain source of pure and elevated thoughts, and upright, benevolent, and magnanimous actions.

This then is common to the books of both writers; that they furnish a direct and distinguished contrast to the atrabilious gloom of some modern works of genius, and the wanton, but not artless levity of others. They yield a memorable, I trust an immortal, accession to the evidences of a truth not always fashionable in literature, that the mind of man may put forth all its bold luxuriance of original thought, strong feeling, and vivid imagination, without being loosed from any sacred and social bond, or pruned of any legitimate affection; and that the Muse is indeed a 'heavenly goddess,' and not a graceless, lawless runagate,

"ἀφρήτωρ, ἀθέμιστος, ἀνέστιος"—

Hom. Il. IX. 63.

Good sense, the sure foundation of excellence in all the arts, is another leading characteristic of these productions.

Assuming the author of Waverley and the author of Marmion to be the same person, it would be difficult in our times to find a second equally free from affectation, prejudice, and every other distortion or depravity of judgment, whether arising from ignorance, weakness, or corruption of morals. It is astonishing that so voluminous and successful a writer should so seldom be betrayed into any of those 'fantastic tricks' which, in such a man, make 'the angels weep,' and (*è converso*) the critics laugh. He adopts no fashionable cant, colloquial, philosophical, or literary; he takes no delight in being unintelligible; he does not amuse himself by throwing out those fine sentimental and metaphysical threads which float upon the air, and tease and tickle the passengers, but present no palpable substance to their grasp; he aims at no beauties that 'scorn the eye of 'vulgar light;' he is no dealer in paradoxes; no affecter of new doctrines in taste or morals; he has no eccentric sympathies or antipathies; no maudlin philanthropy, or impertinent cynicism; no non-descript hobby-horse; and with all his matchless energy and originality of mind, he is content to admire popular books, and enjoy popular pleasures; to cherish those opinions which experience has sanctioned; to reverence those institutions which antiquity has hallowed; and to enjoy, admire, cherish, and reverence all these with the same plainness, simplicity, and sincerity as our ancestors did of old.

There cannot be a stronger indication of good sense in a writer of fiction, than the judicious management of his fable; and in this point both the novelist and the poet often attain unusual excellence: their incidents are, not always, but generally, well contrived and well timed; and their personages, almost without exception, act from intelligible motives and on consistent principles. It is to the

quality of good sense, more particularly as evinced in the management and keeping up of character, that the authors of Marmion and Waverley are in a great measure indebted for the strong interest with which their stories are read. When the ruling motives, habitual feelings, and occasional impulses of the agents are natural and consistent, and such as strike us by their analogy to what we have ourselves experienced: then distance of time, remoteness of place, strange incidents, unusual modes of society, no longer freeze our sympathies or dissipate our curiosity; we become domesticated in castles, convents, and Highland fastnesses; and we converse more sociably with Cœur-de-Lion and the Knight of Snowdoun, than with half the heroes of scandalous and fashionable novels, whose adventures happened last week, within a furlong of St. James's.

The powerful operation of good sense is remarkably exemplified (if it be necessary to cite an example) in that gem of romantic fable, the Lay of the Last Minstrel. Such fantastic incidents, such grotesque superstitions, and a state of society so anomalous, as that story presents, might, notwithstanding the charms of its poetry, furnish matter of incurable offence to the prejudices of cultivated minds, but the characters are so distinctly conceived, and their parts in the action so judiciously assigned, their manners, words, and conduct on every occasion are so consistent, and so rationally adapted to their respective views, habits, and modes of life, that the wildest scenes assume an air of truth and reality, a persuasive natural grace, which fascinates and disarms of his objections (I will say, if you agree with me) the most discerning and experienced critic.

The good sense I have thus highly commended may exhibit itself in two ways; either in the just delineation of characters, to which that quality is especially attributed, or

in the discreet and masterly treatment of any character whatever: Lord Howard and the Lady of Branksome are strong instances of the first class, in the poem just alluded to; and Wat Tinlinn and William of Deloraine of the second. The novels being a species of composition better suited than poetry to the description of sober and unambitious excellencies, afford, in some of their heroes and heroines, more finished examples of wisdom and sound understanding than are found, or can reasonably be expected, in the metrical tales. I scarcely need mention, in support of this remark, the names (which you have no doubt anticipated) of Father Eustace, in the Monastery; Rebecca, the Jewess, 'a pearl—richer than all her tribe*;'—and the incomparable Jeany Deans, whose exquisite natural sagacity, so long and severely tried, compels me to believe, that her last witless adventure with Master Staunton, the Whistler, is a fable disingenuously palmed upon Peter Pattieson by some envious detractor. Of characters not distinguished by strong sense in themselves, but bearing testimony, by the manner in which they are drawn, to the accurate judgment and nice discretion of the writer, every volume of the novels will supply abundant examples.

One of the first inquiries that suggest themselves in such investigations as the present is, how far the authors resemble each other in their style of composition. You must have observed, however, that in the novels, as well as in the prose works of the author of Marmion, the style seldom presses itself on our consideration: some glorious and some discreditable exceptions will immediately occur to you; but, generally speaking, it is the spirit, not the structure, of the sentence that obtains our attention, and if the language

* Othello.

becomes elevated and enriched, the thought also rises in proportion, and maintains its ascendancy. In this respect the novels before us differ strikingly from the work of Mr. Hope, already alluded to, where the elegance and aptness of the style add sensibly, nay, perhaps too obviously, to the effect of every passage, and equally assert their claim to praise in the gayest, the saddest, and the tenderest scenes.

You will remark also, that those parts of the novels in which fine thoughts and fine composition have been most successfully united, are evidently, from the peculiar nature of their subjects, and from their highly imaginative or passionate character, unfit to be placed in comparison with any passage of a sober literary essay, or historical memoir, though proceeding from the same pen. I might transcribe the parting harangue of Meg Merrilies to Godfrey Bertram*, the young fisherman's funeral in the Antiquary†, the death of Mucklewrath the preacher‡, Jeany Deans's supplication to Queen Caroline§, the dissolution of the Chapter at Templestowe by Cœur-de-Lion‖, or Elizabeth's torch-light procession to Kenilworth¶, all specimens of admirable composition; but would it not be absurd to inquire what these extracts have in common with any page selected from the Life of Swift or Dryden, from the Essay on Border Manners and History**, or even from Paul's Letters?

If, however, we view the style of the novels at its ordinary level, we shall, I think, find it bear as great resemblance to

* Guy Mannering, vol. i. ch. 8. † Vol. iii. ch. 2, 3.
‡ Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. iv. ch. 5.
§ Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. iii. ch. 12.
‖ Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 14. ¶ Kenilworth, vol. iii. ch. 5.
** Prefixed to the Border Minstrelsy, vol. i.

that of the other prose works as can exist between two modes of writing, when both are unmarked by any strong characteristic feature. Neither the author of Waverley, nor the editor of Dryden, is to be recognized by a frequent or ambitious use of antithesis, inversion, re-iteration, or climax; by sententious brevity or sounding circumlocution; by studied points or efforts to surprise; or, in short, by any of those artifices which, often repeated, form obvious peculiarities in style. The prose of these writers is, on the contrary, remarkable (if it can in any respect be deemed so) for plainness, and for the rare occurrence of ornaments produced by an artful collocation of words. Nothing seems attempted or desired, except to compose at as little expense of labour as possible consistently with the ease of the reader. Their style is therefore fluent, often diffuse, but generally perspicuous: if it is sometimes weakened by a superabundance, it is seldom darkened by a penury of words. We may remark as a characteristic circumstance, that they constantly express thoughts in the regular form of simile, which other writers would condense into metaphor. Their usual phraseology is of that learned and somewhat formal description, very generally adopted for the ordinary purposes of literature, and which, with reference to the business of authorship, may be called technical; a kind of language differing from that in which we converse, or correspond on familiar subjects, as printed characters from a free hand-writing. Yet the tone and spirit in which they deliver themselves are remarkably free from all appearance of pedantry and authoritative stiffness; there is, on the contrary, a winning air of candour in their address, which deserves to be numbered among their chief excellencies. They urge opinions and impart knowledge in the frank, unassuming, and courteous manner of a friend

communicating with a friend. The use of irony or sarcasm appears repugnant to their natural openness and good humour; and accordingly they seldom employ these weapons unless it be for the prosecution of fictitious conflicts between imaginary personages. But there is a kind of serious banter, a style hovering between affected gravity and satirical slyness, in which both writers take an unusual delight: it is a vein which may be traced through almost all their compositions, even, I think, to the poems, but which most frequently discloses itself in the telling of a story. One or two brief instances will bring a multitude to your remembrance.

'St. Cuthbert,' says the author of Marmion, in a note on the second canto of that poem, 'was, in the choice of 'his sepulchre, one of the most mutable and unreasonable 'saints in the calendar. He died A. D. 686, in a her-'mitage upon the Farne islands.—His body was brought 'to Lindisfarne, where it remained until a descent of the 'Danes, about 763, when the monastery was nearly de-'stroyed. The monks fled to Scotland with what they 'deemed their chief treasure, the reliques of St. Cuthbert. 'The saint was, however, a most capricious fellow-traveller; 'which was the more intolerable, as, like Sinbad's Old 'Man of the Sea, he journeyed upon the shoulders of his 'companions. They paraded him through Scotland for 'several years.—He at length made a halt at Norham; from 'thence he went to Melrose, where he remained stationary 'for a short time, and then caused himself to be launched 'upon the Tweed in a stone coffin, which landed him at 'Tilmouth, in Northumberland.—From Tilmouth Cuth-'bert wandered into Yorkshire; and at length made a long 'stay at Chester-le-Street, to which the bishop's see was 'transferred. At length, the Danes continuing to infest the

'country, the monks removed to Rippon for a season; and 'it was in return from thence to Chester-le-Street, that, 'passing through a forest called Dunholme, the saint and 'his carriage became immoveable at a place named Ward-'law, or Wardilaw. Here the saint chose his place of 'residence; and all who have seen Durham must admit, 'that, if difficult in his choice, he evinced taste in at length 'fixing it.'

The following story is prefixed to a ballad, called Græme and Bewick, in the Border Minstrelsy*:—'The quarrel of 'the two old chieftains, over their wine, is highly in cha-'racter. A minstrel, who flourished about 1720, and is 'often talked of by the old people, happened to be perform-'ing before one of these parties, when they betook them-'selves to their swords. The cautious musician, accustomed 'to such scenes, dived beneath the table. A moment after, 'a man's hand, struck off with a back-sword, fell beside 'him. The minstrel secured it carefully in his pocket, as 'he would have done any other loose moveable; sagely 'observing, the owner would miss it sorely next morning.'

In a note on the third canto of Marmion, we are entertained with the narrative of a conflict maintained by an officer and his servant against an apparition. 'How the 'combat terminated,' says the author, 'I do not exactly re-'member, and have not the book by me; but I think the 'spirit made to the intruders on his mansion the usual pro-'posal, that they should renounce their redemption; which 'being declined, he was obliged to retreat.'

The following description, among many others in the same style, occurs in Paul's Letters. 'A good bluff quar-'ter-master of dragoons complained to me of the discom-

* Vol. ii. part 2.

'forts which they experienced from the condition to which 'the country had been reduced, but in a tone and manner 'which led me to conjecture, that my honest friend did not 'sympathise with the peasant, who had been plundered of 'his wine and brandy, so much as he censured the Prussians 'for leaving none for their faithful allies.

"O noble thirst!—yet greedy to drink all."

'In the meanwhile, it is no great derogation from the dis-'cipline of the English army to remark, that some old 'schoolboy practices were not forgotten; and that where 'there occurred a halt, and fruit-trees chanced to be in the 'vicinity, they instantly were loaded like the emblematic 'tree in the frontispiece to Lily's Grammar, only with 'soldiers instead of scholars; and surrounded by their 'wives, who held their aprons to receive the fruit, instead 'of satchels, as in the emblem chosen by that learned gram-'marian.'—*Letter* XI.

In the novels, almost every comic passage, of the narrative kind, is characterized by this burlesque rotundity of diction. I will offer a specimen from the scene where Caleb Balderstone, after stealing the cooper's wild-fowl, (an incident related with incomparable humour,) is overtaken on the road by his foreman. 'I have heard somewhere a 'story of an elderly gentleman, who was pursued by a bear 'that had gotten loose from its muzzle, until completely 'exhausted. In a fit of desperation, he faced round upon 'Bruin, and lifted his cane; at the sight of which the in-'stinct of discipline prevailed, and the animal, instead of 'tearing him to pieces, rose upon his hind-legs, and in-'stantly began to shuffle a saraband. Not less than the

'joyful surprise of the senior, who had supposed himself in 'the extremity of peril from which he was thus unexpectedly 'relieved, was that of our excellent friend Caleb, when he 'found the pursuer intended to add to his prize, instead of 'bereaving him of it. He recovered his latitude, however, 'instantly, so soon as the foreman, stooping from his nag, 'where he sat perched betwixt the two barrels, whispered 'in his ear, 'If ony thing about Peter Puncheon's place 'could be airted their way, John Girder would mak it 'better to the Master of Ravenswood than a pair of new 'gloves,'' &c.—*Bride of Lammermoor*, Vol. I. ch. 12.

Baillie Macwheeble, when dining with the Baron of Bradwardine, 'either out of more respect, or in order to 'preserve that proper declination of person, which showed 'a sense that he was in the presence of his patron—sat upon 'the edge of his chair, placed at three feet distance from 'the table, and achieved a communication with his plate 'by projecting his person towards it in a line which obliqued 'from the bottom of his spine, so that the person who sat 'opposite to him could only see the foretop of his riding 'periwig. This stooping position might have been incon-'venient to another person, but long habit made it, whether 'seated or walking, perfectly easy to the worthy Baillie. 'In the latter posture, it occasioned, no doubt, an unseemly 'projection of the person toward those who happened to 'walk behind; but those being at all times his inferiors, '(for Mr. Macwheeble was very scrupulous in giving place 'to all others), he cared very little what inference of con-'tempt or slight regard they might derive from the circum-'stance. Hence, when he waddled across the court to and 'from his old grey pony, he somewhat resembled a turn-'spit walking upon its hind legs.'—*Waverley*, Vol. I. c. 11.

It may be observed, from some of the examples just quoted, that the two authors exactly resemble each other in their manner of relating a short story. I confine the parallel at present to short stories, because the main narrative of the novels themselves is formed upon too expanded a scale, is too diffuse, too dramatic, and too much ornamented to bear comparison with those brief sketches of popular tradition which are scattered through the notes and prefaces of the author of Marmion for the mere purpose of illustration. We may, however, match this latter class of stories with some brief episodical narratives which now and then occur in the novels, and the result will, I think, favour my criticism. Such are the Legend of Martin Waldeck*, the narrative of Allan M'Aulay's feud with the Children of the Mist†, and the beautiful tale of Lord Ravenswood and the Naiad, in The Bride of Lammermoor‡.

Nor should it pass unnoticed, that the concise historical and political summaries presented by the author of Marmion, in his capacities of biographer and editor, bear in all respects a close resemblance to those with which the novelist is accustomed to usher in his learned and imposing fictions.

Among other peculiarities of style common to both these authors, I regret to mention their extreme negligence, and frequent offences against the simplest and most general rules of composition. This is indeed an age in which many persons write well, but few revise carefully; and it must be owned, that the authors of Waverley and Marmion are alike pre-eminent in their generation as good writers and

* Antiquary, vol. ii. ch. 3.

† Legend of Montrose, fifth chapter.

‡ Vol. i. ch. 5.

as careless revisers. To particularize their transgressions in this respect would be as irksome to myself as I am sure it would be displeasing to you; nor should I have thought such faults worth notice if they had been only of the common magnitude and frequency. I am no 'mighty hunter' after tautologies and cacophonies, but in the present instance, even if we shut our eyes to these blemishes, it is impossible not to see that worse remain behind. A few quiet escapes of national idiom might well have been excused (and our authors are not very often to blame on this head), but who can be patient when Queen Elizabeth herself utters Scoticisms, and her courtiers adopt the fashion*? It may be urged, that all these inaccuracies of style should be forgiven for the excellence and richness of the matter; but this argument may be turned the contrary way. We expect more nicety of hand from the sculptor who works upon a vase of

* 'Tressilian and Varney,' says the Queen, 'are near your 'persons:—you will see that they attend you at Kenilworth. 'And as we *will* then have both Paris and Menelaus within our 'call, so we will have this same fair Helen also,' &c.—*Kenilworth*, vol. ii. ch. 4. The '*will*' in Italics appears to be used Scoticè for *shall*: if not, the sentence is at least extremely uncouth. 'I judged as much as that he was mad,' said Nicholas 'Blount, . . . '*whenever* I saw him with *these* damned boots.''—*Kenilworth*, vol. iii. ch. 6. '*Whenever*' for *as soon as ever*, and '*these*' for *those*; the said boots not being then in the speaker's presence. A similar use of 'whenever' occurs in The Abbot, vol. iii. ch. 2. And 'will' is used for 'shall' in the letter to Captain Clutterbuck, (Introduction to the Monastery). 'I have 'never seen, and never *will* see, one of their faces, and notwithstanding, I believe that as yet I am better acquainted with 'them than any man who lives.'

gold, than from him who carves a beechen cup; and if a mantle hangs ungracefully, the fault is not rendered less vexatious by the splendour of the velvet or rarity of the furs. If indeed it were probable that the writings in which these blemishes occur would slide into oblivion when their hour of novelty was past, I should think the labour of correction not unwisely spared; but considering that a great portion, at least, of the works thus hastily put forth, is likely to be incorporated for ever with the living body of our literature, I watch their imperfections with as much concern as if I saw a magnificent piece of porcelain going to the furnace with the visible impression of a workman's thumb. It is mortifying to anticipate that at some future day, a dunce who has 'broken' Priscian's 'head across,' and 'given' Lindley Murray 'a bloody coxcomb*,' shall imagine himself to be composing *after* the author of Waverley.

It is not in the spirit of Momus's uncandid criticism on the Goddess of Beauty, that I hazard this free censure of a graceful but too negligent Muse. The lovely slattern may perhaps poutingly remark, that a true admirer of her natural perfections would overlook external disadvantages; but I answer, that the very fondness with which we regard her transcendent charms, inflames our jealousy of whatever tends to obstruct their influence.

> "If thou, that bidst me be content, wert grim,
> Ugly, and slander'ous to thy mother's womb,
> * * * * * *
> Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,
> * * * * * *
> I would not care, I then would be content;
> For then I should not love thee."
>
> *King John*, Act iii. Sc. 1.

* Twelfth Night, last scene.

I speak the more unreservedly on this point, because the works of our two authors, although so loose and unfinished in general, yet contain more than enough of polished and harmonious writing to convince us that the faults complained of are not the result of any constitutional unaptness, of any innate or rooted indisposition to the 'limæ labor.' A great part, for instance, of the excellent Life of Dryden (prefixed to the edition of his works in eighteen volumes) is composed with an accuracy and neatness entirely unexceptionable; but in this as in the other productions under our review (and here I include the poems), we may often find, within the compass of a few pages, two styles as different from each other as the sluttish Artemisia from the elegant Belinda.

It would, however, be unjust to dismiss this part of the subject without observing that on some happy occasions both the novelist and his rival exhibit a much higher excellence than mere neatness or accuracy; I mean that irresistible natural sweetness which flows from true feeling and refined taste, and, without these, is unattainable by the most experienced pen. It is impossible for tenderness and poetic beauty of sentiment to be more enchantingly set off by artless melody of diction than in the first introductory pages of Old Mortality; and after indulging so unreservedly in the language of dispraise, I shall not, I think, incur your blame for extracting a passage which excites, in my mind, unmingled admiration.

'Most readers,' says the manuscript of Mr. Pattieson, 'must have witnessed with delight the joyous burst which 'attends the dismissing of a village-school on a fine summer 'evening. The buoyant spirit of childhood, repressed with 'so much difficulty during the tedious hours of discipline, 'may then be seen to explode, as it were, in shout and 'song, and frolic, as the little urchins join in groups on

'their play-ground, and arrange their matches of sport for 'the evening. But there is one individual who partakes of 'the relief afforded by the moment of dismission, whose 'feelings are not so obvious to the eye of the spectator, or 'so apt to receive his sympathy. I mean the teacher him-'self, who, stunned with the hum, and suffocated with the 'closeness of his school-room, has spent the whole day '(himself against a host) in controuling petulance, exciting 'indifference to action, striving to enlighten stupidity, and 'labouring to soften obstinacy; and whose very powers of 'intellect have been confounded by hearing the same dull 'lesson repeated a hundred times by rote, and only varied 'by the various blunders of the reciters. Even the flowers 'of classic genius, with which his solitary fancy is most 'gratified, have been rendered degraded, in his imagina-'tion, by their connexion with tears, with errors, and with 'punishment; so that the Eclogues of Virgil and Odes 'of Horace are each inseparably allied in association with 'the sullen figure and monotonous recitation of some blub-'bering school-boy. If to these mental distresses are added 'a delicate frame of body, and a mind ambitious of some 'higher distinction than that of being the tyrant of child-'hood, the reader may have some slight conception of the 'relief which a solitary walk, in the cool of a fine summer 'evening, affords to the head which has ached, and the 'nerves which have been shattered, for so many hours, in 'plying the irksome task of public instruction.

'To me these evening strolls have been the happiest 'hours of an unhappy life; and if any gentle reader shall 'hereafter find pleasure in perusing these lucubrations, I 'am not unwilling he should know, that the plan of them 'has been usually traced in those moments, when relief from 'toil and clamour, combined with the quiet scenery around 'me, has disposed my mind to the task of composition.

'My chief haunt, in these hours of golden leisure, is the 'banks of the small stream, which, winding through a 'lone 'vale of green bracken,' passes in front of the village school-'house of Gandercleugh. For the first quarter of a mile, 'perhaps, I may be disturbed from my meditations, in order 'to return the scrape, or doffed bonnet, of such stragglers 'among my pupils as fish for trouts or minnows in the little 'brook, or seek rushes and wild flowers by its margin. 'But, beyond the space I have mentioned, the juvenile 'anglers do not, after sunset, voluntarily extend their ex-'cursions. The cause is, that farther up the narrow valley, 'and in a recess which seems scooped out of the side of the 'steep heathy bank, there is a deserted burial-ground which 'the little cowards are fearful of approaching in the twilight. 'To me, however, the place has an inexpressible charm. 'It has been long the favourite termination of my walks, 'and, if my kind patron forgets not his promise, will (and 'probably at no very distant day) be my final resting-place 'after my mortal pilgrimage.

'It is a spot which possesses all the solemnity of feeling 'attached to a burial-ground, without exciting those of a 'more unpleasing description. Having been very little 'used for many years, the few hillocks which rise above 'the level plain are covered with the same short velvet 'turf. The monuments, of which there are not above seven 'or eight, are half sunk in the ground, and overgrown with 'moss. No newly-erected tomb disturbs the sober serenity 'of our reflections by reminding us of recent calamity, and 'no rank springing grass forces upon our imagination the 'recollection, that it owes its dark luxuriance to the foul and 'festering remnants of mortality which ferment beneath. 'The daisy which sprinkles the sod, and the hare-bell which 'hangs over it, derive their pure nourishment from the dew of 'Heaven, and their growth impresses us with no degrading

'or disgusting recollections. Death has indeed been here, 'and its traces are before us; but they are softened and 'deprived of their horror by our distance from the period 'when they have been first impressed. Those who sleep 'beneath are only connected with us by the reflection that 'they have once been what we now are, and that, as their 'reliques are now identified with their mother earth, ours 'shall, at some future period, undergo the same transforma-'tion.'—*Old Mortality*, ch. 1.

The following passage, on a very different subject, is written in the same spirit, and although less accurately composed, possesses similar beauties.

'It was on the second night after my arrival in Paris, 'that, finding myself rather too early for an evening party 'to which I was invited, I strolled out, enjoying the pure 'and delicious air of a summer night in France, until I 'found myself in the centre of the Place de Louis Quinze, 'surrounded, as I have described it, by objects so noble in 'themselves, and so powerfully associated with deep historic 'and moral interest. 'And here am I at length in Paris,' 'was the natural reflection; 'and under circumstances how 'different from what I dared to have anticipated! That is 'the palace of Louis le Grand; but how long have his de-'scendants been banished from its halls, and under what 'auspices do they now again possess them! This superb 'esplanade takes its name from his luxurious and feeble 'descendant; and here, upon the very spot where I now 'stand, the most virtuous of the Bourbon race expiated, by 'a violent death inflicted by his own subjects, and in view 'of his own palace, the ambitions and follies of his prede-'cessors. There is an awful solemnity in the reflection, 'how few of those who contributed to this deed of injustice 'and atrocity now look upon the light, and behold the pro-

'gress of retribution. The glimmering lights that shine 'among the alleys and parterres of the Champs Elysées 'indicate none of the usual vigils common in a metropolis. 'They are the watch-fires of a camp, of an English camp, 'and in the capital of France, where an English drum has 'not been heard since 1436, when the troops of Henry the 'Sixth were expelled from Paris. During that space, of 'nearly four centuries, there has scarce occurred a single 'crisis which rendered it probable for a moment, that Paris 'should be again entered by the English as conquerors; 'but least of all, could such a consummation have been ex- 'pected at the conclusion of a war, in which France so long 'predominated as arbitress of the continent, and which had 'periods when Britain seemed to continue the conflict only 'in honourable despair.'

'There were other subjects of deep interest around me. 'The lights which proceeded from the windows and from 'the gardens of the large hotel occupied by the Duke of 'Wellington, at the corner of the Rue des Champs Elysées, 'and which chanced that evening to be illuminated in 'honour of a visit from the allied sovereigns, mingled with 'the twinkle of the camp-fires and the glimmer of the tents; 'and the music, which played a variety of English and 'Scottish airs, harmonized with the distant roll of the 'drums, and the notes of that beautiful point of war which 'is performed by our bugles at the setting of the watch. 'In these sounds there was pride and victory and honour, 'some portion of which descended (in imagination at least) 'to each, the most retired and humblest fellow-subject of 'the hero who led, and the soldiers who obeyed, in the 'achievements which had borne the colours of Britain into 'the capital of France.' But there was enough around me 'to temper the natural feelings of elation, which, as a

'Briton, I could not but experience. Monuments rose on 'every side, designed to commemorate mighty actions, 'which may well claim the highest praise that military 'achievement alone, abstracted from the cause in which it 'was accomplished, could be entitled to.——No building 'among the splendid monuments of Paris, but is marked 'with the name, or device, or insignia, of an emperor, 'whose power seemed as deeply founded as it was widely 'extended. Yet the gourd of the prophet, which came 'up in a night and perished in a night, has proved the 'type of authority so absolute, and of fame so diffused; 'and the possessor of this mighty power is now the inha-'bitant of a distant and sequestered islet, with hardly so 'much free will as entitles him to claim from his warders 'an hour of solitude, even in the most solitary spot in the 'civilized word.'—*Paul's Letters*, Letter XII.

LETTER V.

O with how great liveliness did he represent the conditions of all manner of men!—from the overweening monarch to the peevish swaine, through all intermediate degrees of the superficial courtier or proud warrior, dissembled churchman, doting old man, cozening lawyer, lying traveler, covetous merchant, rude seaman, pedantick scolar, the amourous shepheard, envious artisan, vain-glorious master and tricky servant;———He had all the jeers, squibs, flouts, buls, quips, taunts, whims, jests, clinches, gybes, mokes, jerks, with all the several kinds of equivocations and other sophistical captions, that could properly be adapted to the person by whose representation he intended to inveagle the company into a fit of mirth.

ΕΚΣΚΥΒΑΛΑΥΡΟΝ, *or the Discovery of a most exquisite Jewel, &c.* (By Sir Thomas Urquhart.) London, 1653. P. 105, 6.

An important and highly characteristic portion of the novels to which the foregoing observations on style bear very little reference, is the dialogue: a subject which I thought might conveniently be reserved for separate consideration.

In comparing the dramatic scenes of the two writers, it will of course be proper to allow something for the difference between prose composition and lyrical poetry, in their general tone, and cast of phraseology. I must candidly own, too, that if it were necessary for the present purpose to point out any specimen of dialogue in the poems

as rivalling that of the novels, taken in its happiest vein, I must at once abandon this topic. The display of exquisite humour and natural feeling in the characters and language of Cosmo Comyne Bradwardine, Dominie Sampson, honest Dandie Dinmont, Baillie Jarvie, Old Milnwood and his housekeeper, Lady Margaret Bellenden, Serjeant Bothwell, Jenny Dennison, Cuddie, and Mause, and the Covenanters, Robin Hood and the Clerk of Copmanhurst and the buxom Richard, have, I freely own, no counterparts in all the range of fiction from the Last Minstrel to Harold the Dauntless: nor would it be reasonable to expect, in compositions of this latter kind, such lively colloquial turns as the following:

'Our knight of the broken head first kissed and hugged 'them' (the children) 'all round, then distributed whistles, 'penny-trumpets, and gingerbread, and, lastly, when the 'tumults of their joy and welcome got beyond bearing, 'exclaimed to his guest, 'This is a' the gudewife's fault, 'Captain—she will gie the bairns a' their ain way.'.

''Me! Lord help me,' said Ailie, who at that instant 'entered with the bason and ewer, 'how can I help it? 'I have naething else to gie them, poor things!''—*Guy Mannering*, vol. ii. ch. 3.

Or the Highlander's whimsical expostulation with the Baillie for singeing his plaid: 'Saw ever ony body a de-'cent gentleman fight wi' a firebrand before?'—*Rob Roy*, vol. iii. ch. 1.

Or the reflection which escapes with so much *naïveté* from Jeany Deans, when, after her tragi-comic parting with poor Dumbiedikes, her feelings of distress and gratitude give way for a moment to her sense of ridicule, as the Laird is hurried away in his night-gown by the mutinous Rory Bean. 'He's a gude creature,' said she, 'and a kind—it's

'a pity he has sae willyard a powney.'—*Heart of Mid Lothian*, vol. iii. ch. 1.

But if the comparison be restricted to those points in which a near resemblance may be reasonably expected, an examination of the dialogue will, I think, go far in confirming our assurance of the novelist's identity with the poet.

Their address in combining narrative with conversation, so that each supports and animates the other, has been too long admired and celebrated to need illustration by particular examples. I cannot, however, forbear mentioning two splendid instances; the death of Marmion, and the distress of Sir Arthur and Miss Wardour on Knockwinnock Sands*.

Not less remarkable are the nicety of perception and felicity of execution with which they adapt language to the sex, age, character, and condition of the speaker. A few examples will show how similarly (if not equally in degree) the same talent is developed by these authors in both modes of composition: how each (as the author of Marmion says of Swift) 'seems, like the Persian dervise, to' possess 'the 'faculty of transfusing his own soul into the body of any 'one whom he' may select;—'of seeing with his eyes, em-'ploying every organ of his sense, and even becoming 'master of the powers of his judgment†.'

In the reply of young Buccleuch to the English archer, observe the admirable combination of childish simplicity with native haughtiness and courage:

> "For when the Red-Cross spied he,
> The boy strove long and violently.

* Antiquary, vol. i. ch. 7.

† Life of Swift (prefixed to the edition of his works in 19 volumes—Edinburgh 1814), conclusion, page 496.

'Now, by St. George,' the archer cries,
'Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Shews he is come of high degree.'
'Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
And if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scott from Esk to Tweed;
And if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thine arrows and thy bow,
I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow!'
'Gramercy for thy good will, fair boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep good order:
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou'lt make them work upon the border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre thou shalt see;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son.'"

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto III. St. 18, &c.

The scene I have quoted has perhaps reminded you of that in which old Stawarth Bolton places his red cross in the bonnet of little Halbert Glendinning, and the boy indignantly 'skims it into the brook.' 'I will not go with 'you,' said Halbert boldly, 'for you are a false-hearted 'southern; and the southerns killed my father; and I will

'war on you to the death, when I can draw my father's 'sword*.'

'God-a-mercy, my little levin-bolt,' said Stawarth, 'the 'goodly custom of deadly feud will never go down in thy 'day, I presume.'—*Monastery*, vol. i. ch. 2.

To infuse into conversation a spirit truly and unaffectedly eminine appears to me one of the most difficult tasks that can be undertaken by a writer of our sex: yet this is in many instances happily achieved by the author of Marmion, although the somewhat antiquated turn of his style is unfavourable to such an attempt. I think his greatest felicity in this respect lies in occasional snatches of speech interwoven with animated description; as when, in Holy-rood palace, Lady Heron

" rises with a smile
Upon the harp to play."

* * * * *

" —And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the king,
And then around the silent ring;
And laugh'd and blush'd, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!"

Marmion, Canto V. St. 11.

Or where the young chief of Duncraggan is summoned from his father's funeral to the gathering of Clan-Alpine:

" But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,

* " And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be."

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto I. St. 9.

Back to her open'd arms he flew,
Press'd on her lips a fond adieu—
'Alas!' she sobbed,—'and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!'

* * * * *

'Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she mark'd the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
'Kinsman,' she said, 'his race is run
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen,—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now:
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son."—&c.

Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 18.

Nor must I omit that beautiful burst of wounded maternal pride, when the elvish counterfeit of young Buccleuch refuses to mix with the defenders of Branksome:

"Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blushed blood-red for very shame—
'Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch;

* * * * *

Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine!'"

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto IV. St. 11.

But there are many colloquial passages of greater length in these poems, highly distinguished by feminine grace and tenderness: as, for instance, the conversations of Matilda

with her two lovers, in Rokeby*: that scene in the Lady of the Lake, where Fitz-James, impelled by his passion for Ellen, revisits the Lonely Isle on the eve of a Highland insurrection†; and the opening conversation in the Lord of the Isles, when Edith of Lorn, attended by her nurse, is watching for her tardy bridegroom:

" 'Think'st thou . . . to cheat the heart,
That, bound in strong affection's chain,
Looks for return, and looks in vain?
No! sum thine Edith's wretched lot
In these brief words—He loves her not!
Debate it not—too long I strove
To call his cold observance love,
All blinded by the league that styled
Edith of Lorn—while yet a child,
She tripp'd the heath by Morag's side—
The brave Lord Ronald's destined bride.

* * * * *

He came! and all that had been told
Of his high worth seem'd poor and cold,
Tame, lifeless, void of energy,
Unjust to Ronald and to me!
Since then, what thought had Edith's heart
And gave not plighted love its part!—
And what requital? cold delay—
Excuse that shunn'd the spousal day.—
It dawns, and Ronald is not here!—
Hunts he Bentalla's nimble deer,
Or loiters he in secret dell
To bid some lighter love farewell,

* Cantos IV. and V. † Canto IV. St. 16 to 18.

And swear, that though he may not scorn
A daughter of the House of Lorn,
Yet, when these formal rites are o'er,
Again they meet, to part no more?'
'' Hush, daughter, hush! thy doubts remove,
More nobly think of Ronald's love.
Look, where beneath the castle gray
His fleet unmoor from Aros bay!

* * * * *

Thy Ronald comes, and while in speed
His galley mates the flying steed,
He chides her sloth!' Fair Edith sigh'd,
Blush'd, sadly smiled, and thus replied:—
'Sweet thought, but vain!' "—&c.

Lord of the Isles, Canto I. St. 9, &c.

In furnishing parallel instances from the novels, my only difficulty would be to choose among the multitude. One short passage, however, I am induced to extract, as harmonizing well with the strain of poetry just now selected:

'In finding herself once more by the side of Ivanhoe, 'Rebecca was astonished at the keen sensation of pleasure 'which she experienced, even in a moment when all around 'them both was danger, if not despair. As she felt his 'pulse and inquired after his health, there was a softness in 'her touch and in her accents, implying a kinder interest 'than she would herself have been pleased to have vo- 'luntarily expressed. Her voice faultered and her hand 'trembled, and it was only the cold question of Ivanhoe, ''Is it you, gentle maiden?' which recalled her to herself, 'and reminded her the sensations which she felt were not 'and could not be mutual. A sigh escaped, but it was 'scarce audible, and the questions which she put to the

'knight concerning his state of health, were put in the tone
'of calm friendship. Ivanhoe answered her hastily that he
'was, in point of health, as well and better than he could
'have expected—'Thanks,' he said, 'dear Rebecca, to thy
'helpful skill.'

''He calls me dear Rebecca,' said the maiden to herself,
''but it is in the cold and careless tone which ill suits the
'word. His war-horse—his hunting-hound, are dearer to
'him than the despised Jewess.'

''My mind, gentle maiden,' continued Ivanhoe, 'is
'more disturbed by anxiety, than my body with pain.
'From the speeches of these men who were my warders
'just now, I learn that I am a prisoner, and—in the castle
'of Front-de-Bœuf—if so, how will this end, or how can
'I protect Rowena and my father?'

''He names not the Jew or Jewess,' said Rebecca, in-
'ternally: 'yet what is our portion in him? and how justly
'am I punished by Heaven for letting my thoughts dwell
'upon him!''—*Ivanhoe*, vol. ii. ch. 15.

But of all the dramatic scenes in which this writer has depicted female manners and character, there is none perhaps so purely natural and irresistibly pathetic as the first interview of Jeanie Deans with her imprisoned sister in the presence of Ratcliffe: a piece of writing which alone might entitle its author to sit down at the feet of Shakspeare. I cannot forego the pleasure of adorning this unworthy page with an extract, though it is almost profanation to dismember so beautiful a scene.

''O, if ye had spoken a word,' again sobbed Jeanie,—
''if I were free to swear that ye had said but ae word of
'how it stude wi' ye, they couldna hae touched your life
'this day.'

''Could they na?' said Effie, with something like awakened

'interest—for life is dear even to those who feel it as a bur-
'then—'Wha tauld ye that, Jeanie?'

''It was ane that kenn'd what he was saying weel aneugh,'
'replied Jeanie, who had a natural reluctance at mentioning
'even the name of her sister's seducer.

''Wha was it? I conjure ye to tell me,' said Effie, seating
'herself upright.—'Wha could tak interest in sic a cast-bye
'as I am now?—Was it—was it *him?*'

''Hout,' said Ratcliffe, 'what signifies keeping the poor
'lassie in a swither?—I'se uphaud it's been Robertson that
'learned ye that doctrine when ye saw him at Muschat's
'Cairn.'

''Was it him?' said Effie, catching eagerly at his words
'—'was it him, Jeanie, indeed?—O, I see it was him—
'poor lad, and I was thinking his heart was as hard as the
'nether mill-stane. And him in sic danger on his ain part
'—poor George!'

'Somewhat indignant at this burst of tender feeling to-
'wards the author of her misery, Jeanie could not help
'exclaiming, 'O, Effie, how can ye speak that gate of sic a
'man as that?'

''We maun forgi'e our enemies, ye ken,' said poor Effie,
'with a timid look and a subdued voice, for her conscience
'told her what a different character the feelings with which
'she still regarded her seducer bore, compared with the
'Christian charity under which she attempted to veil it.

''And ye hae suffered a' this for him, and ye can think
'of loving him still?' said her sister, in a voice betwixt pity
'and blame.

''Love him?' answered Effie—'If I hadna loved as
'seldom woman loves, I hadna been within these wa's this
'day; and trow ye that love sic as mine is lightly forgotten?
'Na, na—ye may hew down the tree, but ye canna change

'its bend. And O, Jeanie, if ye wad do good to me at this 'moment, tell me every word that he said, and whether he 'was sorry for poor Effie or no.'

''What needs I tell ye ony thing about it,' said Jeanie. ''Ye may be sure he had ower muckle to do to save him-'sell, to speak lang or muckle about ony body beside.'

''That's no true, Jeanie, though a saunt had said it,' 'replied Effie, with a sparkle of her former lively and irri-'table temper.—'But ye dinna ken, though I do, how far 'he pat his life in venture to save mine.' And looking at 'Ratcliffe, she checked herself and was silent.''—*Heart of Mid Lothian*, vol. ii. ch. 8.

The felicity of these writers is seen not only in their skilful adaptation of discourse to the natural varieties of age, sex, and disposition, but in the wonderful address and versatility with which they suit it to all acquired habits and peculiarities, whether national or professional, the effect of accident or result of education. If we look into the poems, the gentle Fitz-Eustace and the 'sworn horse-courser' Harry Blount*, the rough English soldier John of Brent, and his pert but courtly captain†, are marked and obvious instances; and the manners and circumstances of every personage in the Lay of the Last Minstrel are as vividly pictured in his language as in the poet's description. For example:

> "Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried
> 'Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
> Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddle-side,
> Comes wading through the flood.

* See, particularly, Marmion, Canto V. St. 31.—VI. St. 16, 21, 28.

† Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 7 to 11.

Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St. Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,
In vain he never twanged the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower
That drove him from his Liddle tower;
And by my faith,' the gate-ward said,
'I think 'twill prove a warden-raid.'

* * * * *

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe.—
'Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,
And all the German hagbut-men,
Who have long lain at Askerten:
They cross'd the Liddle at curfew hour,
And burned my little lonely tower;
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burned this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the live-long night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turn'd at Priesthaugh-Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog;
Slew Fergus with my lance outright;
I had him long at high despite:
He drove my cows last Fastern's night.'"

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto IV. St. 4, 6.

The speech of Deloraine over Richard Musgrave's body * is equally poetical, and even more characteristic.

If we turn to the prose romances, examples offer themselves in perplexing abundance. I select one, which recommends itself by a congeniality in spirit, if not a resemblance in details, to the passage of which the last extract forms a part:

'"Are we to stand here a' day, sirs," exclaimed one tall 'young man, 'and look at the burnt wa's of our kinsman's 'house? Every wreath of the reek is a blast of shame upon 'us! Let us to horse, and take the chase.—Who has the 'nearest blood-hound?'

'"It's young Earnscliff," answered another, 'and he's 'been on and away wi' six horse lang syne, to see if he can 'track them.'

'"Let us follow him then, and raise the country, and 'make mair help as we ride, and then have at the Cumber-'land reivers. Take, burn, and slay—they that lie nearest 'us shall smart first.'

'"Whisht! haud your tongues, daft callants," said an 'old man, 'ye dinna ken what ye speak about. What! 'wad ye raise war atween twa pacificated countries?'

'"And what signifies deaving us wi' tales about our 'fathers," retorted the young man, 'if we're to sit and see 'our friends' houses burnt ower their heads, and no put 'out a hand to revenge them? Our fathers didna do that, 'I trow.'

'"I am no saying ony thing against revenging Hobbie's 'wrang, puir chield; but we maun take the law wi' us in 'thae days, Simon," answered the more prudent elder.

* Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto V. St. 29.

'And, besides,' said another old man, 'I dinna believe 'there's ane now living that kens the lawful mode of fol-'lowing a fray across the Border. Tam o' Whittram kenn'd 'a' about it, but he died in the hard winter.'

'Ay,' said a third, 'he was at the great gathering when 'they chased as far as Thirlwall; it was the year after the 'fight of Philiphaugh.'

'Hout,' exclaimed another of these discording coun-'sellors, 'there's nae great skill needed; just put a lighted 'peat on the end of a spear, or hay-fork, or something, and 'blaw a horn, and cry the gathering word, and then it's 'lawful to follow gear into England, and recover it by the 'strong hand, or to take gear frae some other Englishman, 'providing ye lift nae mair than's been lifted frae you. 'That's the auld Border law, made at Dundrennan in the 'days of the Black Douglas. De'il ane need doubt it.'

'Come away, then, lads,' cried Simon, 'get to your 'geldings, and we'll take auld Cuddy the muckle tasker 'wi' us; he kens the value o' the stock and plenishing that's 'been lost. Hobbie's stalls and stakes shall be fou again or 'night; and if we canna big up the auld house sae soon, 'we'se lay an English ane as low as Heughfoot is—and 'that's fair play, a' the warld ower.'——

* * * * * * *

'Ay, ay!' exclaimed Simon of Hackburn, 'that's the 'gate to take it, Hobbie. Let women sit and greet at hame, 'men must do as they have been done by; it's the Scripture 'says't.'

'Haud your tongue, sir,' said one of the seniors sternly; 'dinna abuse the Word that gate, ye dinna ken what ye 'speak about.'

'Hae ye ony tidings?—Hae ye ony speerings, Hobbie?

'—O, callants, dinna be ower hasty;' said old Dick of the 'Dingle.

''What signifies preaching to us e'enow?' said Simon, 'if 'ye canna make help yoursel, dinna keep back them that can.'

''Whisht, sir; wad ye take vengeance or ye ken wha 'has wrang'd ye?'

''D'ye think we dinna ken the road to England as weel 'as our fathers before us?—All evil comes out o'there 'away—it's an auld saying and a true, and we'll e'en away 'there, as if the devil was blawing us south.'

''We'll follow the track o' Earnscliff's horses ower the 'waste,' cried one Elliot. 'I'll prick them out through the 'blindest moor in the Border an' there had been a fair held 'there the day before,' said Hugh the blacksmith of Ringle-'burn, 'for I aye shoe his horse wi' my ain hand.' 'Lay 'on the deer hounds,' cried another; 'where are they?'

''Hout, man, the sun's been lang up, and the dew is aff 'the grund—the scent will never lie.'

'Hobbie instantly whistled on his hounds, which were 'roving about the ruins of their old habitation, and filling 'the air with their doleful howls.

''Now, Killbuck,' said Hobbie, 'try thy skill this day.—'Four o'ye, wi' Simon, haud right forward to Græme's gap. 'If they're English, they'll be for being back that way. The 'rest disperse by twasome and threesome through the waste, 'and meet me at the Trysting pool. Tell my brothers, 'when they come up, to follow and meet us there. Poor 'lads, they will hae hearts weel nigh as sair as mine; little 'think they what a sorrowful house they are bringing their 'venison to. I'll ride o'er Mucklestane-Moor mysel.'

''And if I were you,' said Dick of the Dingle, 'I would 'speak to canny Elshie. He can tell you whatever betides 'in this land, if he's sae minded.'—*Black Dwarf*, ch. 7, 8.

If further illustration were required, I might transcribe at random from the discourse of Mac-Ivor's clansmen in Waverley, Serjeant Bothwell (or indeed any other character) in Old Mortality, Mr. Owen or the Baillie in Rob Roy, Abbot Boniface in the Monastery and Abbot, and Sir Dugald Dalgetty in A Legend of Montrose. The wanton exuberance of the novelist's dramatic talent is singularly evinced in this last story, by his introducing, without any absolute necessity, a professional conference between two second-sighted prophets: a short dialogue, but extremely forcible and poetical*. The colloquies of Ailsie Gourlay and her fellow-aspirants in witchcraft† may be mentioned as similar prodigalities of eccentric and luxuriant imagination.

The excellencies I have thus inadequately praised are sometimes accompanied by kindred faults; and these also are common to both writers. The author of Waverley is perhaps unrivalled in the learned ease and happy address with which he handles the phraseology of remote times; there is scarcely a chapter in Kenilworth which does not exhibit this talent in matchless perfection. But he sometimes, either from precipitation, or disgust at his task, or simple negligence, allows his dialogue to languish in a bald verbosity, and sink into that weak and affected strain, which, although sufficiently formal and antiquated, can never, by the greatest stretch of indulgence, be accepted as the similitude of real conversation in any age or class of society. The same occasional error had been imputed to the author of Marmion, before Waverley saw the light. Two or three short examples in verse and prose will convey

* Tales of My Landlord, Third Series, vol. iv. ch. 9.

† Ibid. vol. ii. ch. 9, &c.

to your mind at once what I may have expressed but imperfectly:

" 'The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way.' "

Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 10.

" 'What council, nobles, have we now?—
To ambush us in greenwood bough,
And take the chance which fate may send?'—

* * * * *

Answer'd fierce Edward, 'Hap what may,
In Carrick, Carrick's lord must stay.
I would not minstrels told the tale,
Wild-fire or meteor made us quail.'—
Answer'd the Douglas, 'If my liege
May win yon walls by storm or siege,
Then were each brave and patriot heart
Kindled of new for loyal part.' "

Lord of the Isles, Canto V. St. 16.

'I will cumber your grace no longer with my presence,' 'said the Lady Lochleven, 'unless you have aught to com-'mand me.'

''Nought, our good hostess,' answered the Queen, 'un-'less it be to pray you that on another occasion you deem 'it not needful to postpone your better employment to wait 'so long upon us.'

''May it please you,' added the Lady Lochleven, 'to

'command this your gentleman to attend us, that I may 'receive some account of these matters which have been sent 'hither for your grace's use.'

''We may not refuse what you are pleased to require, 'madam,' answered the Queen.—*Abbot*, vol. iii. ch. 3.

To quaintness of expression is sometimes added a quaintness of thought, incompatible with the spirit of easy and gallant conversation, and indeed of all unpremeditated discourse: as in the following encounter of wits between Miss Vernon and Rashleigh:

''I prize sincerity more than courtesy, sir, and you know 'I do.'—

''Courtesy is a gallant gay, a courtier by name and by 'profession,' replied Rashleigh, 'and therefore most fit for 'a lady's bower.'

''But Sincerity is the true Knight,' retorted Miss Vernon, ''and therefore much more welcome, cousin.'—*Rob Roy*, vol. i. ch. 10.

By and by the skirmish is renewed:

''I suppose I must in discretion bring the courtier Ce-'remony in my company, and knock when I approach the 'door of the library?'

''No, no, Rashleigh,' said Miss Vernon, 'dismiss from 'your company the false archimage Dissimulation, and it 'will better ensure you free access to our classical con-'sultations.'—Ch. 12.

Henry Blount, in Marmion, thus ambiguously alludes to a threatened invasion of Scotland:

"Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!

I trust, that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross, and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home:
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trampled to and fro."
Canto IV. St. 3.

The condition of poor Isaac in Front-de-Bœuf's dungeon is described in this far-fetched strain by the Templar:

'——But know, bright lily of the vale of Bacca! that 'thy father is already in the hands of a powerful alchemist, 'who knows how to convert into gold and silver even the 'rusty bars of a dungeon grate. The venerable Isaac is 'subjected to an alembic, which will distil from him all he 'holds dear, without any assistance from my requests or thy 'entreaty. Thy ransom must be paid by love and beauty, 'and in no other coin will I accept it.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. ii. ch. 10.

To make their characters discourse by the book is a fault which many novelists commit through barrenness of fancy, or ignorance of the world. It cannot be imputed to either of these causes that the authors of Waverley and Marmion sometimes impart a tinge of their own archæological erudition to the sallies of playful gallantry and of homely humour. Thus in the Lady of the Lake, Fitz-James and Ellen grow absolutely pedantic in their continued allusions to the old romances*. Fitz-Eustace in Marmion touches on the same extreme, but the nature of his character allows, or indeed requires, it. Roland Græme and Catherine Seyton, in the Abbot, carry the humour farther, and with less ex-

* Canto I. St. 23, 24, 26, 28, 30.

cuse. An heraldic pleasantry on the cognizance of the Douglas family appears to be somewhat too much in favour, for it occurs both in The Lady of the Lake—

> "O might I live to see thee grace,
> In Scotland's court, thy birth-right place,—
> * * * * *
> The cause of every gallant's sigh,
> And leading star of every eye,
> And theme of every minstrel's art,
> The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"
>
> Canto II. St. 10.

And in the Abbot:

'"Who would have said the young sprightly George 'Douglas would have been contented to play the locksman 'here in Lochleven, with no gayer amusement than that of 'turning the key on two or three helpless women?—a 'strange office for a Knight of the Bleeding Heart!'"— Vol. ii. ch. 8.

The following passage very palpably betrays its bookish origin. When Ellen Douglas and Allan-bane the harper arrive at Stirling, escorted by a soldier, his comrade asks—

> "But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
> As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
> Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
> Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp,
> Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
> The leader of a juggler band."
>
> *Lady of the Lake,* Canto VI. St. 6.

It may be answered, that although the glee-maiden, ape, and harper, of an ancient juggler's troop, are known to us only by the aid of antiquarian research, they were common

and familiar enough in the time of James the Fifth, to be a subject of popular raillery. But the qualities of all dialogue must be estimated by the effect it produces on the reader or hearer. Now it is true that, within a certain limit, allusions proper to the age or place in which the scene is laid, tend powerfully to strengthen the dramatic effect, and assist us in imagining that we listen to a real conversation, or at least hear it reported by a witness bearing all the passages freshly in his memory. But when, in the midst of a flowing and easy colloquy, we encounter some pointed reference, and that not inevitably suggested by the occasion, to an object or custom with which even well-educated persons are not universally familiar, a momentary pause ensues, while we recur in mind to the learned sources whence the author derived his information; meanwhile our fancy drops from its flight; the illusion of the scene forsakes us; and after the charm is dissolved, we care but little for being convinced that we ought still to have remained under its dominion. When Arruntius, in Jonson's tragedy of Sejanus, satirically tells the courtiers to 'run a lictor's pace,' and bids one get 'Liburnian porters' to bear his 'obsequious fatness*,' I suppose every reader's imagination is transported instantly from the streets of Rome to a college library; yet lictors and their paces, and Liburnian porters, were as well known to the fellow-citizens of Sejanus as glee-maidens and jugglers to the garrison of Stirling.

Another practice which I think materially injures the *vraisemblance* of a scene, is to represent persons celebrated in history as indulging in idle and sportive allusions to their own and each other's most famous adventures and sayings. This is so much the error of a novice, and therefore so sur-

* Sejanus, Act V. Sc. 8.

prising in the authors of Waverley and Marmion, that, however rare in its occurrence, it cannot pass wholly unnoticed.

When the meteor which had lured Bruce and his followers from Arran to the coast of Carrick, sank down and left them in darkness,

> " Ronald to Heaven a prayer address'd,
> And Douglas cross'd his dauntless breast;
> 'St. James protect us!' Lennox cried;
> But reckless Edward spoke aside,
> 'Deem'st thou, Kirkpatrick, in that flame
> Red Comyn's angry spirit came,
> Or would thy dauntless heart endure
> Once more to make assurance sure*?' "

The Duke of Argyle's prattle with his children, in the presence of Jeanie Deans, about Sheriff-muir and the Bob of Dumblane†, is still more inartificial, and, indeed, falls so much below the author's usual style, that I have no inclination to extract the passage.

I know not whether it is owing to any perverseness of our nature, that a fictitious conversation, presenting these broad references to the recorded history of the speakers, awakens incredulity, and arms us against illusion. It certainly is not impossible that a statesman or warrior should at a given time be heard familiarly discoursing on his own most celebrated exploit or memorable saying; neither is it

* Lord of the Isles, Canto V. St. 14. I need not repeat the well-known circumstances of Comyn's assassination here alluded to.

† Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. iv. ch. 3.

absolutely incredible that a portrait-painter should surprise a member of parliament musing over a favourite bill, or an officer unrolling the plan of a boasted position or manœuvre; yet the limner obtains small credit for his ingenuity in choosing such situations, and the novelist and poet, in my opinion, achieve as little for the honour of their art by their direct and palpable appeals to our commonest historical recollections. Experience, I think, tells us, that most persons, during the active season of life at least, are sparing of allusions to great and momentous incidents in their own past career, partly from natural reserve, and partly, it may be, because such events, at the time of their occurrence, so entirely fill the thoughts, and exhaust every sensation they are capable of producing, that they do not afterwards, on common occasions, recur to the mind with that freshness which prompts the tongue to utterance. If this observation should appear unfounded, it is at least certain, that when the celebrated characters introduced in a fictitious tale seem over-forward in reminding us of their own deeds and sayings, the propriety of the scene is almost as much violated as if they announced themselves like Holofornes's nine worthies:

> "My scutcheon plain declares, that I am Alisander."
> *Love's Labour Lost*, Act V. Sc. 2.

Or,

> "I Pompey am, Pompey surnamed the Great,
> That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat." *Ibid.*

Little, I believe, can be added to this catalogue of faults, which has been thus prolonged, not because the enumeration gave me any pleasure, but that corresponding blemishes are

usually thought to afford stronger presumption of affinity than similar perfections. *

It may be worth while, however, in concluding, to notice one insignificant exception to what has been said of the versatility exhibited by our authors in their dramatic pictures of character: I mean the marked failure of both in scenes of bold and unmitigated vulgarity. These are but seldom attempted, and it is evident they are not written *con amore*; they appear sordidly coarse, and want that free spirit of joyous insolence which alone, on such occasions, can compel us to overlook the vileness of the subject. John of Brent and his comrades, in the Lady of the Lake, are at least as saucy and irreverent as Burns's Merry Beggars; but the soldiers, with all their licence, are coldly and formally debauched; while the joviality of Posie-Nansie's is so animated and glowing, that the whole spirit of the revel rushes upon us, and vagrancy appears almost sublime in the lines—

"Here 's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here 's to all the wandering train!
Here 's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out, Amen!

A fig for those by law protected,
Liberty 's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest!"

Inglis the trooper in Old Mortality*, Frank Levitt the thief in The Heart of Mid-Lothian†, and noble Captain Craigengelt in The Bride of Lammermoor‡, are at times even re-

* See the last vol. ch. 14. † Vol. iii. ch. 4.
‡ Vol. ii. ch. 8: the conversation with Bucklaw

pulsively coarse; but their coarseness is of that kind which neither illustrates the character nor invigorates the language; it is at once overcharged and ineffective, plainly indicating that the writer, unsuccessful in seizing the spirit of genuine *blackguardism*, has made an aggravated display of its outward signs, to conceal or atone for the essential deficiency. In portraying that unconscious vulgarity which results from selfishness, conceit, and bad education, the author of Waverley exhibits all his accustomed felicity, as in the character of Mrs. Nosebag*, and occasionally in that of Sir Dugald Dalgetty; but he has not yet caught, with his usual nice apprehension, the reckless and ribald audacity of the 'lewd rabble,' and those who adopt their manners; and his essays of this kind, having all the rudeness of reality, without affording the pleasure which is produced by judicious imitation, remind us of the economical humorist, in Miss Burney's Cecilia, who appears at a masquerade with the borrowed suit of a real chimney-sweeper.

In the general remarks which I offered on the style of these two writers, I mentioned, as one of its distinguishing features, a tendency to diffuseness. This, however, is by no means a prevailing characteristic of their dialogue, which, in all its happiest parts, is peculiarly terse and compact, and becomes, according to the occasion, sententious or epigrammatic, without any diminution of ease, or sacrifice of propriety. Hence it is, that when the stories of these authors have been compressed for the stage (as the Constrictor serpent compresses a lordly stag), it has commonly been found expedient to retain the original dialogue, not only of the novels, but occasionally even of the

* Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 14.

poems*, as more effective than any which could be substituted, and better calculated for developing the fable with animation, propriety, and distinctness.

I cannot support these observations better than by referring to that scene in Marmion where the hero is received by King James in the banqueting-room at Holy-rood. The monarch, in addressing Marmion, glances a splenetic taunt at the Earl of Angus:

> "'Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;
> Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
> A chief unlike his sires of old.
> He wears their motto on his blade,
> Their blazon o'er his towers display'd;
> Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
> More than to face his country's foes.
> * * * * * *
> Under your guard these holy maids
> Shall safe return to cloister shades,
> And, while they at Tantallon stay,
> Requiem for Cochran's soul may say.'—
> And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,
> Across the monarch's brow there came
> A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.
>
> In answer nought could Angus speak;
> His proud heart swell'd well nigh to break:
> He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
> A burning tear there stole.
> His hand the monarch sudden took,
> That sight his kind heart could not brook:

* The Lady of the Lake was performed at a minor theatre, with (I believe) scarcely any alteration of the colloquial parts.

'Now, by the Bruce's soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,
I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true.
Forgive me, Douglas, once again.'—
And while the king his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whisper'd to the king aside:
'Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed!
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart:
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye!'—

Displeased was James, that stranger view'd
And tamper'd with his changing mood.
'Laugh those that can, weep those that may,'
Thus did the fiery monarch say,
'Southward I march by break of day;
And if within Tantallon strong
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle hall.'—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt:

'Much honour'd were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood;
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby hills the paths are steep;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's king shall cross the Trent:
Yet pause, brave prince, while yet you may.'—
The monarch lightly turn'd away,
And to his nobles loud did call,—
'Lords, to the dance,—a hall, a hall!'
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led dame Heron gallantly;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out—'Blue bonnets o'er the Border.'"

Marmion, Canto V. St. 15—17.

The bravado of Risingham—

"Mine is but half the dæmon's lot,
For I believe, but tremble not,"

Rokeby, Canto III. St. 20.

if quaint, is at least well turned. The conversations between Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu, in the Lady of the Lake (Cantos IV. and V.), contain many neat points, urged with great spirit, and, occasionally, with much felicity of expression. Waldemar's reply to Prince John, in the following passage, is a happy retort, and contains a weighty moral reflection:

"'Saxon or Jew,' answered the prince, 'Saxon or Jew,

'nog or nog, what matters it? I say, name Rebecca, were 'it only to mortify the Saxon churls.'

'A murmur arose even among his own immediate at-'tendants.

''This passes a jest, my lord,' said Bracy; 'no knight 'here will lay lance in rest if such an insult is attempted.'

''It is the mere wantonness of insult,' said one of the 'oldest of Prince John's followers, Waldemar Fitzurse; ''and if your grace attempt it, cannot but prove ruinous to 'your projects.'

''I entertained you, sir,' said John, reining up his palfrey 'haughtily, 'for my follower, but not for my counsellor.'

''Those who follow your grace in the paths which you 'tread,' said Waldemar, but speaking in a low voice, ''acquire the right of counsellors; for your interest and 'safety are not more deeply gaged than theirs.''—*Ivanhoe*, vol. i. ch. 9.

Nothing can be more spirited than the short dialogue in the preceding chapter, when Locksley is imperiously questioned by the prince on his applauding the resistance of Cedric to De Bracy's insulting movement against Athelstane the Unready:

''I always add my hollo,' said the yeoman, 'when I see 'a good shot, or a gallant blow.'

''Say'st thou?' answered the prince; 'then thou canst 'hit the white thyself, I'll warrant.'

''A woodsman's mark, and at woodsman's distance, I can 'hit,' answered the yeoman.

''And Wat Tyrrell's mark, at a hundred yards,' said a 'voice from behind, but by whom uttered could not be 'discerned.''

There is great pithiness in Baillie Jarvie's answer to

Helen Macgregor, who takes offence at being claimed as kinswoman by a Glasgow mechanic:

'The virago lopped the genealogical tree, by demanding 'haughtily, 'If a stream of rushing water acknowledged 'any relation with the portion withdrawn from it for the 'mean domestic uses of those who dwelt on its banks?'

''Vera true, kinswoman,' said the Baillie; 'but for a' 'that the burn wad be glad to hae the mill-dam back again 'in simmer, when the chuckie-stanes are white in the sun.'' —*Rob Roy*, vol. iii. ch. 4.

It is observable throughout the novels and poems, that wherever the interest rises to a very high pitch, there the dialogue, if that form of composition be employed, becomes in a peculiar degree condensed and pointed. Let me call to your mind, as instances, the scene of Fergus M'Ivor's condemnation*; that in which Edgar Ravenswood arrives at the Lord Keeper's to claim a final interview with Miss Ashton†; and the altercation between Malcolm Græme and the chief of Clan-Alpine‡. Indeed, all the quarrels in these romances appear to me, as Sir Lucius O'Trigger would say, the prettiest quarrels in the world: every kind of heroic or gentlemanlike dissension is managed with admirable skill and spirit; and sometimes conducted through the requisite stages of Retort, Quip, Reply, Reproof, and Countercheck, with a lofty-minded discretion which would hardly have misbecome the days of Saviolo or Caranza.

Yet, with all their address in carrying on that kind of dispute which tends to martial defiance, both writers are, I think, unfortunate in their endeavours to imitate the con-

* Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 20.

† Bride of Lammermoor, vol. iii. ch. 6.

‡ Lady of the Lake, Canto II. St. 34, &c.

flict of acrimonious but polished raillery, as it is waged by well-bred malice on peaceable occasions. The mutual taunts of Marmion and Sir Hugh the Heron, when the knight asks his guest, of the page that used to attend him,

> "Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
> To serve in lady's bower?
> Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
> A gentle paramour?"—

and the baron, remarking in his turn the absence of Heron's flighty consort, ironically inquires—

> "——has that dame, so fair and sage,
> Gone on some pious pilgrimage*?"

are somewhat rude, even for Norham castle. In the Abbot, the war of sarcasm between Mary Stuart and the Lady of Lochleven usually ends in bringing down both disputants to the common level of incensed females; a circumstance perhaps strictly natural, but pertaining to that kind of nature which, as we fly from it in real life, we are not greatly pleased to encounter in fiction; certainly not where the fable is of an elevated and romantic cast.

There is one distinguished excellence in the dialogue of our authors, which, although hastening to another part of the subject, I cannot leave unpraised. It is the simple yet nervous and impassioned eloquence that breaks forth, apparently unbidden, in many of their scenes, and, while it flows in the aptest and most harmonious language, seems to rise spontaneously from a genuine and uncontroulable impulse. Thus in the Countess Amy's rapturous exclamation,

'It is Leicester!—it is my noble earl!—it is my Dudley!

* Marmion, Canto I. St. 15, 16.

'—Every stroke of his horse's hoof sounds like a note of 'lordly music*!'

all the words bound triumphantly over the tongue, and (fanciful as the remark may seem, when thus drily stated) the largeness of the phrase appears to correspond with a dilating of the heart.

But I will point out one or two examples in a calmer tone, and on a more extended scale. Such is the animated and energetic apology of Roderick Dhu for his predatory course of life†. The following speech of Claverhouse, though far from new in substance, is, I think, composed with great eloquence as well as simplicity. Part of its effect, however, may be owing to the prophetic glance which it casts, in the conclusion, at the speaker's own fate:

'You are but young in these matters, Mr. Morton,—and 'I do not think the worse of you as a young soldier for 'appearing to feel them acutely. But habit, duty, and 'necessity, reconcile men to every thing.—You would hardly 'believe that, in the beginning of my military career, I had 'as much aversion to seeing blood spilt as ever man felt; it 'seemed to me to be wrung from my own heart; and yet, 'if you trust one of those whig fellows, he will tell you I 'drink a warm cup of it every morning before I breakfast. 'But, in truth, Mr. Morton, why should we care so much 'for death, light around us whenever it may? Men die 'daily—not a bell tolls the hour but it is the death-note of 'some one or other, and why hesitate to shorten the span 'of others, or take over anxious care to prolong our own?

* Kenilworth, vol. ii. ch. 10. A dignified version of

"His very step has music in't
As he comes up the stair."

† Lady of the Lake, Canto V. St. 7.

'It is all a lottery—when the hour of midnight came you 'were to die—it has struck—you are alive and safe, and 'the lot has fallen on those fellows who were to murder 'you.—It is not the expiring pang that is worth thinking 'of in an event that must happen one day, and may befal 'us on any given moment—it is the memory which the 'soldier leaves behind him, like the long train of light that 'follows the sunken sun—that is all which is worth caring 'for, which distinguishes the death of the brave or the 'ignoble. When I think of death, Mr. Morton, as a thing 'worth thinking of, it is in the hope of pressing one day 'some well-fought and hard-won field of battle, and dying 'with the shout of victory in my ear—that would be worth 'dying for, and more, it would be worth having lived for!' —*Old Mortality*, last vol. ch. 5.

There is a melancholy grandeur in the reflections of Bertram Risingham on his approaching close of life:

"My soul hath felt a secret weight,
A warning of approaching fate:
A priest had said, Return, repent!
As well to bid that rock be rent.
Firm as that flint I face mine end;
My heart may burst, but cannot bend.

The dawning of my youth, with awe
And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw;
For over Redesdale it came,
As bodeful as their beacon flame.
Edmund,—thy years were scarcely mine,
When, challenging the clans of Tyne
To bring their best my brand to prove,
O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove;
But Tynedale, nor in tower nor town,
Held champion meet to take it down.

My noontide India may declare;
Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
Her natives, from mine angry eye.
Panama's maids shall long look pale
When Risingham inspires the tale;
Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
The froward child with Bertram's name.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night."

Rokeby, Canto VI. St. 20, 21.

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LETTER VI.

—— Nec tenui—
Pennâ, biformis—
Vates——

Hor. Carm. Lib. II. Od. 20.

You will recollect, Sir, that in a former letter, when speculating on the studies and pursuits with which the two writers appeared equally conversant, I offered reasons for believing that the author of Waverley was, by nature and practice, a poet. I propose now to compare him, in a few points of his poetical character, with the author of Marmion.

The short metrical pieces introduced in some of the novels are too scanty in substance, and too slightly characterized (though occasionally spirited and elegant), to furnish any important matter for comparison. Besides, if these ornamental stanzas could be traced to the very portfolio of the author of Marmion, we should still have proved too little, unless we could repel the natural and easy suggestion, that one writer probably composed the novels, and another contributed the poetry. Such illustrations, therefore, as I may find occasion to draw from these works, will be taken from their prose passages, which, after all, comprise the richest vein of fancy and of feeling.

If required to distinguish the poetry of the author of Marmion from that of other writers by a single epithet, I should apply to it the term Popular. The same easy openness which was remarked in his prose style, is also a

prevailing quality of his poetical composition, where, however, it appears not so much in verbal arrangement, as in the mode of developing and expressing thoughts. Few authors are less subject to the fault of over-describing, or better know the point at which a reader's imagination should be left to its own activity; but the images which he does supply are placed directly in our view, under a full noon-day light. It is a frequent practice of other poets, instead of exhibiting their ideas in a detailed and expanded form, to involve them in a brilliant complication of phrase, high-wrought and pregnant with imagery, but supplying materials only, which the reader may shape out in his own mind according to his reach of fancy, or subtlety of apprehension, and not presenting in itself any regular, fixed, or definite representation of objects. This style of composition is well exemplified in the ποντίων κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα of Æschylus*; the lines of Shakspeare,

> "Now———
> —— creeping murmur, and the poring dark,
> Fills the wide vessel of the universe—"
>
> *Chorus to Henry V.* Act IV.

these of Milton,

> "The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
> Now to the moon in wavering morrice move—"
>
> *Comus.*

and where, describing the battle of the angels, he says, that the war

> ——— "Soaring on main wing,
> Tormented all the air."
>
> *Paradise Lost*, B. VI.

* Prometh. 89, 90.

In no instance that I recollect, does the author of Marmion adopt this kind of poetical phraseology, which conveys, in a few words, the germ and essence of a beautiful or sublime description, but is not itself that description. I do not insist upon the circumstance as a subject of either praise or censure; I only point to it as distinguishing the style and method of an individual writer from those of his brethren.

Again, it is very common with poets of strong feeling and exuberant fancy, to describe (if that word may be applied to such a process) by accumulating round the principal object a number of images not physically connected with it, or with each other, but which, through the unfailing association of ideas, give, unitedly, the same impulse to the imagination and passions, as would have been produced by a finished detail of strictly coherent circumstances. Such is the effect of that well-known passage in Macbeth, where murder is thus personified:

> "Now———
> ——————— wither'd murder,
> Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
> Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
> With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
> Moves like a ghost."
>
> *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. I.

This method, also, appears unsuitable to the simplicity with which the author of Marmion is accustomed to unfold his poetical conceptions. In his mode of describing, the circumstances, however fanciful in themselves, still follow each other by natural consequence, and in an orderly series; and hang together, not by the intervention of unseen links, but by immediate and palpable

conjunction. His epithets and phrases, replete as they often are with poetic force and meaning, have always a direct bearing upon the principal subject. In short, he pursues his theme, from point to point, with the steadiness and plainness of one who descants on a common matter of fact. The difference between his style of description, and the two kinds which I have placed in opposition to it, is very perceptible in the following lines—

> "They ———
> ——— bade the passing knell to toll
> For welfare of a parting soul.
> Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
> Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
> To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
> His beads the wakeful hermit told;
> The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
> But slept ere half a prayer he said;
> So far was heard the mighty knell,
> The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
> Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
> Listed before, aside, behind,
> Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
> And quaked among the mountain fern,
> To hear that sound, so dull and stern."
>
> *Marmion*, Canto II. St. 33.

These remarks, which in part explain my application of the term "popular," will not, I think, appear irrelevant, when it is considered that a poet accustomed to express himself in this expanded, simple, and consecutive style, can readily transfer the riches of his genius to prose composition, while the attempt would be almost hopeless to one who delighted in abrupt transition and fanciful com-

bination, and whose thoughts habitually condensed themselves into the most compendious phraseology.

The author of Marmion is a popular poet in this respect also; that his writings display an intense though discriminating sensibility to the grand and obvious appearances of nature, rather than that acute and critical study of her abstruser phenomena, which some writers carry even to pedantry. He rarely seems ambitious to mark out for description a circumstance, or combination of circumstances, beyond the scope of common observation, but embracing the whole supposed scene with a vigorous grasp of imagination, relies for success on his judgment in selecting, his enthusiasm in feeling, and his energy in painting*. His reflections, too, on the objects before him, are unmarked by any laboured subtlety or capricious singularity; he has no eccentric starts or devious excursions of thought; his verse is not the exposition of sentiments cherished, and speculations prosecuted, by a refined and fanciful individual, but the lively copy of those sensations and habits of mind, in which nature and custom have disposed the generality of mankind to participate. The spirit of his poetry is not contemplative, but stirring and passionate; he seldom pauses upon any object after he has noted the first impression it makes on the senses, and the first idea it calls up in the mind; to reduce things to their elements, and meditate on them in the abstract, is not his manner; but he loves,

* It must be owned, however, that the subjects of his verse are often so new and striking in their general features, as to preclude the necessity of those minute and curious particularities which are sometimes judiciously resorted to for the purpose of giving an air of freshness to a familiar and almost exhausted theme.

on the contrary, to view them invested with such adventitious circumstance, and illuminated by such artificial lights, as most powerfully enhance their effect on the imagination and feelings.

Hence, more than any other poet, he delights in localizing his descriptions of general nature, as in these elegant lines,

> " ——————— but still,
> When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
> And July's eve, with balmy breath,
> Waved the bluebells on Newark heath;
> When throstles sung on Hare-head Shaw,
> And corn waved green on Carterhaugh,
> And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
> The aged harper's soul awoke!
> Then would he sing achievements high,
> And circumstance of chivalry,
> * * * * *
> And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
> Bore burden to the minstrel's song."
>
> *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*—Conclusion.

On the other hand he seldom introduces the name of a place unmarked by some appropriate allusion to natural objects. It is his frequent practice to diffuse a peculiar tinge over his scene, by causing us to see it through the eyes of some strongly characterized individual: as in several of the lines describing William of Deloraine's expedition to Melrose; and in the following passage—

> " Harold was born where restless seas
> Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
> Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
> O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;

Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow*, fair Kirkwall!
Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odinn rode her wave;
And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child."

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto VI. St. 21.

Again he neglects no opportunity of touching those chords of association by which places, things, and persons are connected in men's thoughts with local or national attachments, with romantic or patriotic recollections, with feelings of superstitious awe, or with the traditional veneration of mysterious antiquity. The Border beacons in communication with Branksome,

"Gleamed on many a dusky tarn,
Haunted by the lonely earn;
On many a cairn's grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw."

Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 29.

In the stag-hunt upon the wild Highland frontier,

"The sounds of sylvan war
Disturb the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where 'tis told
A giant made his den of old."

Lady of the Lake, Canto I. St. 4.

* Not now either the one or the other, if I may judge from the degraded condition in which I saw it six years ago.

When Deloraine and the Monk sit down in the dreary chancel of Melrose, we are told that

"A Scottish monarch slept below,"

and the sepulchral lamps burned dimly

"Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant chief of Otterburne,
And thine, dark knight of Liddesdale!"
Lady of the Lake, Canto II. St. 10, 12.

And you doubtless remember with how much romantic effect the wizard priest,

"Whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust,"

is introduced in the description of

"Lone St. Mary's silent lake"—

where

"Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near."
Marmion, Introduction to Canto II.

The beautiful itineraries introduced in several of the poems, as, for instance, the journey of Deloraine, just now referred to, Bruce's voyage from Skye to Arran*, and that of the Whitby nuns to Holy Island†, abound in similar allusions.

There is, indeed, throughout the poetry of this author, even when he leads us to the remotest wildernesses, and the most desolate monuments of antiquity, a constant

* Lord of the Isles, Canto IV. St. 7 to 13.
† Marmion, Canto II. St. 8, 9.

reference to the feelings of man in his social condition; others, as they draw closer to inanimate things, recede from human kind; to this writer even rocks and deserts bear record of active and impassioned life, nay sometimes appear themselves inspired with its sensations; the old forgotten chieftain groans in the lonely cavern, and with "tears of rage impels the rill;" the maid's pale ghost "from rose and hawthorn shakes the tear," and the "phantom knight" shrieks along the field of his battles*.

In these which I have termed popular qualities, the poetical passages of the author of Waverley correspond, as far as the nature of prose composition admits, with those of his tuneful brother. The descriptions of both proceed with the same steady and even pace; their topics are equally simple and obvious, their reflections equally plain and natural. The novelist, like the poet, is a passionate, more than a contemplative writer, and treats of mankind, not like a mere philosophical observer, but like a companion, and sharer in their pursuits. Nor does he labour to analyze and simplify objects, or to separate ideas which, from whatever cause, have become associated together. He willingly avails himself of any power that resides in particular names and allusions to sway our secret moods and impulses; and whatever theme may engage him, his constant aim is, directly or indirectly, to bring it home as much as possible to the business and the feelings of man. These remarks may be properly closed by an extract which I have chosen as affording a fair general view of the author's style and habits of composition, when his narrative rises into poetry.

'In that pleasant district of merry England which is

* Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto V. St. 2.

'watered by the river Don, there extended in ancient 'times a large forest, covering the greater part of the 'beautiful hills and valleys which lie between Sheffield 'and the pleasant town of Doncaster.—Here haunted of 'yore the fabulous dragon of Wantley; here were fought 'many of the most desperate battles during the civil wars 'of the Roses; and here also flourished in ancient times 'those bands of gallant outlaws, whose deeds have been 'rendered so popular in English song.

* * * * *

'The sun was setting upon one of the rich grassy glades 'of this 'forest:—hundreds of broad short-stemmed 'oaks, which had witnessed perhaps the stately march of 'the Roman soldiery, flung their broad gnarled arms 'over a thick carpet of the most delicious green sward; 'in some places they were intermingled with beeches, 'hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely 'as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking 'sun; in others they receded from each other, forming 'those long sweeping vistas, in the intricacy of which 'the eye delights to lose itself, while imagination con-'siders them as the paths to yet wilder scenes of sylvan 'solitude. Here the red rays of the sun shot a broken 'and discoloured light that partially hung upon the 'shattered boughs and mossy trunks of the trees, and 'there they illuminated in brilliant patches the portions 'of turf to which they made their way. A considerable 'open space, in the midst of this glade, seemed formerly 'to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical super-'stition; for, on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to 'seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of 'rough unhewn stones, of large dimensions. Seven stood 'upright; the rest had been dislodged from their places,

'probably by the zeal of some convert to Christianity, 'and lay, some prostrate near their former site, and others 'on the side of the hill. One large stone only had found 'its way to the bottom, and in stopping the course of a 'small brook, which glided smoothly round the foot of 'the eminence, gave, by its opposition, a feeble voice of 'murmur to the placid and elsewhere silent streamlet.

"The human figures which completed this landscape 'were in number two, partaking, in their dress and ap- 'pearance, of that wild and rustic character which be- 'longed to the woodlands of the West Riding of York- 'shire at this early period,' &c.—*Ivanhoe*, Vol. I. ch. 1.

In attempting to draw the poetical character of the author of Marmion, I have dwelt particularly on his judgment in selecting, enthusiasm in feeling, and energy in painting. From the union of these qualities arises that particular excellence in which, rivalled only by the author of Waverley, he far surpasses all other contemporary poets and descriptive writers, and is little inferior, if inferior, to the greatest of any age. I mean that realizing power which brings the imagined scene so forcibly to our minds, that we almost seem to behold it with our eyes. If there is any single perfection which, beyond all the rest, distinguishes either the author of Marmion, or the novelist, considered as a poet, it is the freshness, the living truth, the ἐνάργεια of his narrative and description. Both seem to transport themselves at pleasure, by a strong effort of fancy, into the midst of the objects they propose to represent; and hence the composition of their stories, in every important part, is either picturesque or dramatic, or partakes of both qualities; and the circumstances are so well chosen and aptly combined, and the incidents follow one another so naturally, that we cannot but sup-

pose the entire scene to have existed at once, or the whole action to have passed uninterruptedly, in the author's imagination, and to have been transferred thence to his paper, like a minute of actual observations, or an abstract of real occurrences.

The picturesque mode of narrative, which impresses an event or situation on the fancy by a vivid representation of all the outward circumstances as they unitedly offer themselves to the sense, is brilliantly exemplified in the following passage of Kenilworth:

'The door was unlocked and thrown open, and Janet 'and her father rushed in, anxious to learn the cause of 'these reiterated exclamations.

'When they entered the apartment, Varney stood by 'the door grinding his teeth, with an expression in which 'rage, and shame, and fear, had each their share. The 'Countess stood in the midst of her apartment, like a juve- 'nile Pythoness, under the influence of the prophetic fury. 'The veins in her beautiful forehead started into swoln 'blue lines through the hurried impulse of her articula- 'tion—her cheek and neck glowed like scarlet—her eyes 'were like those of an imprisoned eagle, flashing red 'lightning on the foes whom it cannot reach with its 'talons. Were it possible for one of the Graces to have 'been animated by a Fury, the countenance could not 'have united such beauty with so much hatred, scorn, 'defiance, and resentment. The gesture and attitude 'corresponded with the voice and looks, and altogether 'presented a spectacle which was at once beautiful and 'fearful; so much of the sublime had the energy of passion 'united with the Countess Amy's natural loveliness. Janet, 'as soon as the door was open, ran to her mistress; and 'more slowly, yet with more haste than he was wont,

'Anthony Foster went to Richard Varney.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. ii. ch. 10.

I do not know a scene more elaborately picturesque than that in Marmion, where the Abbess of St. Hilda's, the haughty prioress of Tynemouth, and the blind old Abbot of St. Cuthbert's, are described sitting in judgment on Constance Beverley, at Holy Island. But the whole passage would require too much space, and to omit any circumstance would leave the picture incomplete. I will therefore turn to a shorter specimen, and of a milder character.

"They closed beside the chimney's blaze,
And talked, and hoped for happier days,
And lent their spirits' rising glow
Awhile to gild impending woe;—
High privilege of youthful time,
Worth all the pleasures of our prime!
The bickering faggot sparkled bright,
And gave the scene of love to sight,
Bade Wilfrid's cheek more lively glow,
Played on Matilda's neck of snow,
Her nut-brown curls and forehead high,
And laughed in Redmond's azure eye.
Two lovers by the maiden sate,
Without a glance of jealous hate;
The maid her lovers sate between,
With open brow and equal mien;
It is a sight but rarely spied,
Thanks to man's wrath and woman's pride*.

Rokeby, Canto V. St. 6.

* To these examples may be added the beautiful lines already quoted (in Letter II.), from the Lady of the Lake.—"Delightful praise," &c.

The dramatic and picturesque are sometimes united with admirable effect—for instance—

'Of Allan himself it is said, that, in a wonderfully short space after the deed* was committed, he burst into a room in the castle of Inverara, where Argyle was sitting in council, and flung on the table his bloody dirk.

'Is it the blood of James Graham?' said Argyle, a ghastly expression of hope mixing with the terror which the sudden apparition naturally excited.

'It is the blood of his minion,' answered M'Aulay—'It is blood which I was predestined to shed, though I 'would rather have spilt my own.' Having thus spoken, 'he turned and left the castle.'—*Legend of Montrose*, last chapter.

The despair of Rhoderick Dhu, on Douglas's rejection of his suit to Ellen, displays in a striking manner the united skill of painter and dramatist.

"Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch's goomy light,
Like the ill Dæmon of the night
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
But, unrequited love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick with thine anguish stung,
length the hand of Douglas wrung,

* The assassination of Lord Menteith.

While eyes that mocked at tears before,
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherish'd hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its chequer'd shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.

Lady of the Lake.—Canto II. St. 33.

The soliloquy of Glossin, as he watches the escape of his confederate Hatteraick, is another fine example.

'Glossin now arose, and looked out upon the night—'His eye was upon the gigantic and gloomy outlines of 'the old castle, where, in a flanking tower of enormous 'size and thickness, glimmered two lights, one from the 'window of the strong room, where Hatteraick was con-'fined, the other from the adjacent apartment occupied by 'his keepers.—'He observed one of the lights obscured, as 'by an opake body placed at the window. What a moment 'of interest! 'He has got clear of his irons! he is work-'ing at the stancheons of the window—they are surely 'quite decayed, they must give way—O God! they have 'fallen outward, I heard them clink among the stones! the 'noise cannot fail to wake them—furies seize his Dutch 'awkwardness!—The light burns free again—they have 'torn him from the window, and are binding him in the 'room! 'No! he had only retired an instant on the 'alarm of the falling bars—he is at the window again—'the light is quite obscured now—he is getting out!'

'A heavy sound, as of a body dropped from a height 'among the snow, announced that Hatteraick had com-'pleted his escape, and shortly after Glossin beheld a dark

'figure, like a shadow, steal along the whitened beach, 'and reach the spot where the skiff lay. New cause 'for fear! 'His single strength will be unable to float 'her,' said Glossin to himself; 'I must go to the rascal's 'assistance. But no! he has got her off, and now, thank 'God! her sail is spreading itself against the moon—ay, 'he has got the breeze now—would to Heaven it were a 'tempest to sink him to the bottom!' *Guy Mannering*, vol. ii. ch. 12.

The liveliness and air of truth which these writers have given to their narrative and descriptive passages, is attained sometimes by the felicitous combination of several particulars at once natural and striking; sometimes by the opportune suggestion of a single circumstance so manifestly proper to the occasion that, having it before us, we cannot conceive the action to have happened without it, yet so far unexpected, that it appears unlikely to have entered the imagination of a man contriving a fictitious story, or to have engaged any person's notice except in connexion with real facts.

The following descriptions owe their vivacity and truth of effect to the cause first mentioned.

'It was with such feelings that I eyed the approach 'of the new coach lately established on our road, and 'known by the name of the Somerset.—The distant tre- 'mulous sound of its wheels was heard just as I gained the 'summit of the gentle ascent, called the Goslin-brae, from 'which you command an extensive view down the valley 'of the river Gander.'—'I must own I have had great plea- 'sure in watching the approach of the carriage, where the 'openings of the road permit it to be seen. The gay 'glancing of the equipage, its diminished and toy-like ap-

'pearance at a distance, contrasted with the rapidity of its 'motion, its appearance and disappearance at intervals, 'and the progressively increasing sounds that announce 'its nearer approach, have all to the idle and listless spec- 'tator, who has nothing more important to attend to, 'something of awakening interest.'—'On the present occa- 'sion, however, fate had decreed that I should not enjoy 'the consummation of the amusement, by seeing the coach 'rattle past me as I sat on the turf, and hearing the hoarse 'grating voice of the guard, as he skimmed forth for my 'grasp the expected packet, without the carriage checking 'its course for an instant. I had seen the vehicle thunder 'down the hill that leads to the bridge with more than its 'usual impetuosity, glittering all the while by flashes from 'a cloudy tabernacle of the dust which it had raised, and 'leaving a train behind it on the road resembling a wreath 'of summer mist. But it did not appear on the top of the 'nearer bank within the usual space of three minutes.' —*Heart of Mid Lothian*, introductory chapter.

Robert Bruce and his brother finding themselves benighted in the sound of Mull, put their vessel about and run before the wind.

"The helm, to his strong arm consign'd,
Gave the reef'd sail to meet the wind,
And on her alter'd way,
Fierce bounding, forward sprung the ship,
Like greyhound starting from the slip
To seize his flying prey.
Awaked before the rushing prow,
The mimic fires of ocean glow,
Those lightnings of the wave;

Wild sparkles crest the broken tides,
And flashing round, the vessel's sides
With elvish lustre lave,
While, far behind, their livid light
To the dark billows of the night
A gloomy splendour gave."

Lord of the Isles.—Canto I. St. 21.

'See,' says Waverley's Highland Guide, there is an 'earn, which you southerns call an eagle—you have 'no such bird as that in England—he is going to 'fetch his supper from the Laird of Bradwardine's 'braes, but I'll send a slug after him.' He fired his 'piece accordingly, but missed the superb monarch of 'the feathered tribes, who, without noticing the attempt to 'annoy him, continued his majestic flight to the south-'ward. A thousand birds of prey, hawks, kites, carrion 'crows, and ravens, disturbed from the lodgings which 'they had just taken up for the evening, rose at the re-'port of the gun, and mingled their hoarse and discord-'ant notes with the echoes which replied to it, and with 'the roar of the mountain cataracts. Evan, a little dis-'concerted at having missed his mark, when he meant to 'have displayed peculiar dexterity, covered his confusion 'by whistling part of a pibroch, as he reloaded his piece, 'and proceeded in silence up the pass.'—*Waverley*, vol. i. ch. 16.

In the examples I will now offer, the effect depends principally on a single well-conceived circumstance, which imposes on the imagination, sometimes by a striking conformity to general nature; as in the next two quotations:

" A barge across Loch-Katrine flew;
* * * * * * *
So rapidly the bargemen row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had neared the mainland hill."

Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 12.

'A terrible shout soon announced that the door had 'kindled, and was in the act of being destroyed. The 'fire was suffered to decay, but, long ere it was quite ex-'tinguished, the most forward of the rioters rushed, in 'their impatience, one after another, over its yet smoul-'dering remains. Thick showers of sparkles rose high in 'the air, as man after man bounded over the glowing em-'bers and disturbed them in their passage.'—*Heart of Mid Lothian,* vol. i. ch. 5.

Sometimes by an unexpected yet apparently natural and unforced coincidence with some other part of the narrative; as in the following instances:

'It was on this ominous spot that Lucy Ashton first 'drew breath after her long and almost deadly swoon. 'Beautiful and pale—she was seated so as to rest with her 'back against a part of the ruined wall, while her mantle, 'dripping with the water, which her protector had used 'profusely to recall her to her senses, clung to her slender 'and beautifully proportioned form.'—*Bride of Lammer-moor,* vol. i. ch. 5.

In the perilous return of Fitz-James from his second visit to Loch-Katrine—

" All in the Trosach's glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:

Sudden his guide whooped loud and high—
'Murdoch! was that a signal cry?'
He stammer'd forth, 'I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare.'
He looked—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed:—'Ah gallant grey!
For thee—for me perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trosach's dell.—
Murdoch move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die.'"

Lady of the Lake, Canto IV. St. 20.

Or again, by similar correspondence with the costume and habits of the period, or of the individual concerned. As in these examples:

'Julian Avenel, enraged at the firmness of this reply, 'flung from his right hand the cup in which he was about 'to drink to his guest, and from the other cast off the hawk, 'which flew wildly through the apartment. His first mo- 'tion was to lay hand upon his dagger. But changing his 'resolution, he exclaimed, 'To the dungeon with this inso- 'lent stroller!—I will hear no man speak a word for him— 'Look to the falcon, Christie, thou fool—an she escape, I 'will dispatch you after her every man—Away with that 'hypocritical dreamer! drag him hence if he resist.'

'He was obeyed in both points—Christie of the Clint- 'hill arrested the hawk's flight, by putting his foot on her 'jesses, and so holding her fast, while Henry Warden was 'led off.'—*Monastery*, vol. ii. ch. 11.

"In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail."

Lay of the last Minstrel, Canto I. St. 28, 9.

"'Here's my brother's son, Dick Grahame'—'he shall 'take a flag of truce and a trumpet, and ride down to the 'edge of the morass to summon them to lay down their 'arms and disperse.'

"'With all my soul, Colonel,' answered the cornet, 'and 'I'll tie my cravat on a pike to serve for a white flag— 'the rascals never saw such a pennon of Flanders lace in 'their lives before.'"—*Tales of my Landlord*, 1st Series, vol. iii. ch. 2.

In pointing out the faculty which these authors exert, of comprehending at once, in the mind's eye, both the general effect of a scene, and the mutual bearing of its several parts, I should have added, but for interrupting the course of observation, that they possess, in subserviency to this talent, the power of embracing with the same masterly and accurate coup-d'œil, all the external appearances that characterize individual persons. Their scrupulous particularity in the description of physiognomy, demeanour, form, and even dress, often imparts to their stories the air of real memoirs. Where, indeed, the fable treats of personages who have actually existed, such minuteness is not surprising, because we then conclude that the details are copied from some picture, monument, or written record; but it is a distinguishing mark of strong and

original fancy to bestow on an imaginary character, not merely the general cast of countenance and figure which we are accustomed to associate with certain qualities and habits, and the outline of a suitable costume, but also such peculiarities, both of aspect and of external ornament, as oblige us to imagine that we see the copy of an individual, not the abstract of a class.

Any writer, attentive to minute points of tradition, might have represented John Balfour, or the Marquis of Argyle with an oblique cast of vision*; but the scar on Bois-Guilbert's stern brow, which had communicated "a sinister expression," and a slight appearance of distortion to one of his eyes†, is the stroke by which an accomplished artist gives his fancy-piece the air of a portrait.

I have, several times, I believe, applied to our novelist and poet expressions drawn from the art of painting. These suggest themselves the more naturally, as the attachment of both to that fascinating study is so strongly evinced, not only by the picturesque character of their descriptions, but by their frequent incidental notice of the most renowned masters. I am not sure that, in some instances, they do not themselves become the worse poets by being too good painters. Occasionally, at least, their descriptions are so conceived as to remind us more of a picture than of a natural scene; not from any want of poetic beauty or propriety in the several images, but from the pictorial taste with which they are selected and combined. Let me offer, as a specimen, the following compositions:

* Old Mortality, ch. iv—Legend of Montrose, last vol. ch. iv.

† Ivanhoe, ch. ii.

"——— On his course obliquely shone
The narrow valley of Saint John,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sun-beams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The king drew up his charger's rein;
With gauntlet raised he screen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,
And from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
While, 'gainst the sun his armour bright,
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light."

Bridal of Triermain, Canto I, St. 12.

'Evening again found him,' (the Black Dwarf), 'seated 'on his favourite stone. The sun setting red, and among 'seas of rolling clouds, threw a gloomy lustre over the 'moor, and gave a deeper purple to the broad outline 'of heathy mountains which surrounded this desolate 'spot. The dwarf sat watching the clouds as they lowered 'above each other in masses of conglomerated vapours, 'and, as a strong lurid beam of the sinking luminary darted 'full on his solitary and uncouth figure, he might well have 'seemed the demon of the storm which was gathering, or 'some gnome summoned forth from the recesses of the 'earth, by the subterranean signals of its approach. As 'he sate thus, with his eye turned toward the scowling 'and blackening heaven, a horseman rode rapidly towards 'him, and stopping, as if to let his horse breathe for an in-'stant, made a sort of obeisance to the anchoret, with an 'air betwixt effrontery and embarrassment.'—'He wore a 'rusted steel head-piece, a buff jacket of rather an antique 'cast, gloves, of which that for the right hand was covered

'with small scales of iron, like an ancient gauntlet; and 'a long broad-sword completed his equipage.'—*Black Dwarf*, Ch. 6.

> "And well that Palmer's form and mien
> Had suited with the stormy scene,
> Just on the edge, straining his ken,
> To view the bottom of the den,
> Where, deep, deep down, and far within,
> Toils with the rocks the roaring linn."
>
> *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto II.

If these descriptions have an appearance of being borrowed from the painters, there are many, on the other hand, which seem to have been thrown out as a challenge to that profession. Such for instance is the reception of Waverley by Flora Mc Ivor, at the cascade, her handmaid attending with the harp, and the whole scene being enriched by the beams of a setting sun *. Such, too, is the group of Ellen Douglas, watching Fitz-James's departure, with Allan-bane, reclined against the blighted tree, by her side †. Another, in some respects very similar, is that of Miss Wardour conversing from a window, with Edie Ochiltree, who is basking on the bench in the court-yard ‡. And I think I need not call to your remembrance the pathetic meeting between David Deans and his daughter, at Roseneath; which the novelist expresses so earnest a wish to see sketched by his 'friends Wilkie or Allan §.'

From this pictorial turn of a mind habitually disposed

* Waverley, vol. i. ch. 22.

† Lady of the Lake, Canto ii. St. 4, 5.

‡ Antiquary, vol. i. ch. 12.

§ Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. iv. ch. 5.

to the study of nature in all her aspects, arises another striking peculiarity; the marked attention of both writers to what is called in painting Chiaroscuro. There are, comparatively speaking, very few poetical descriptions in the works of either, which do not owe part of their beauty to the management of the light and shade; this, indeed, appears to be the circumstance that first strikes the imagination of each, when he figures any scene to himself; and they sometimes even step aside from the direct course of narrative, to point out some remarkable appearance of illumination or obscurity. Thus, in the conversation between Miss Vere and the Black Dwarf, we are told that the recluse at one time, "laid his hand with a fierce smile on the long dagger which he always wore beneath his garment, and unsheathed it so far that the blade glimmered clear in the fire-light. *" And when Redmond bore Wilfrid from the blazing hall of Rokeby,

> "Beneath an oak he laid him down,
> That in the blaze gleamed ruddy brown."
>
> Canto V. st. 37.

I could not, in any convenient number of extracts, do justice to the infinite copiousness and felicity of invention with which the two authors have distributed their flashes, gleams, glares, sparkles, blazes, sunshine, moonlight, and reflections of all these from water and from metal †;

* Chapter vii.

† We are presented with some striking effects of torch-light in Guy Mannering, Vol. II. ch. 5. The Black Dwarf, ch. 18. Legend of Montrose, ch. 4. Marmion, Canto VI. St. 11. And of fire-light, Marmion, Canto III. St. 6, 7. Guy Manner-

but I am tempted to copy the two following descriptions, by their strong mutual resemblance. Both are highly poetical, more particularly the passage in prose, and it seems evident to me that both are the work of the same poet.

" Then sudden through the darkened air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seemed on flame;
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall,
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
And filled the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish Page it broke;
It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish Dwarf was seen no more!"

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto VI. St. 25.

'He saluted her, as the ceremonial of the time enjoined 'upon such occasions. Their cheeks had touched and

ing, Vol. III. ch. 15. Kenilworth, Vol. I. ch. 10. And a beautiful gleam of reflected sun-shine, Waverley, Vol. I. ch. 8. Contrasts of moonlight and lamplight, Rokeby, Canto V. St. 31. Antiquary, Vol. II. ch. 6. Compositions after Rembrandt, Antiquary, Vol. III. ch. 3. Heart of Mid Lothian, Vol. I. ch. 11. Ivanhoe, Vol. II. ch. 8.

'were withdrawn from each other—Ravenswood had not 'quitted the hand which he had taken in kindly courtesy '—a blush, which attached more consequence by far 'than was usual to such ceremony, still mantled on Lucy 'Ashton's beautiful cheek, when the apartment was sud- 'denly illuminated by a flash of lightning, which seemed 'absolutely to swallow the darkness of the hall. Every 'object might have been for an instant seen distinctly. 'The slight and half sinking form of Lucy Ashton, the 'well proportioned and stately figure of Ravenswood, 'his dark features, and the fiery, yet irresolute expression 'of his eyes—the old arms and scutcheons which hung 'on the walls of the apartment, were for an instant 'distinctly visible to the Keeper by a strong red brilliant 'glare of light. Its disappearance was almost instantly 'followed by a burst of thunder, for the storm cloud was 'very near the castle, and the peal was so sudden and 'dreadful, that the old tower rocked to its foundation, 'and every inmate concluded it was falling on them. The 'soot, which had not been disurbed for centuries, showered 'down the huge tunnelled chimnies—lime and dust flew 'in clouds from the wall; and whether the lightning had 'actually struck the castle, or whether through the violent 'concussion of the air, several heavy stones were hurled 'from the mouldering battlements into the roaring sea 'beneath. It might seem as if the ancient founder of the 'castle was bestriding the thunder-storm, and proclaim- 'ing his displeasure at the reconciliation of his descendant 'with the enemy of his house.'—*Bride of Lammermoor*, Vol. I. ch. 9.

The next two passages have also a strong family likeness—

" Through narrow loop and casement barr'd
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and scar,
All haggard, from the midnight watch." &c.

Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 2.

'There is no period at which men look worse in the 'eyes of each other, or feel more uncomfortable, than 'when the first dawn of daylight finds them watchers. .. 'Such was the pale, inauspicious, and ungrateful light, 'which began to beam upon those who kept watch all 'night, in the hall at Say's Court, and which mingled its 'cold pale blue diffusion with the red, yellow, and smoky 'beams of expiring lamps and torches. The young gal- 'lant .. was so struck with the forlorn and ghastly aspects 'of his companions of the watch, that he exclaimed,' &c. *Kenilworth*, Vol. II. ch. 3.

A mixture of lights is also very poetically described in this passage:

'From behind the same projection glimmered a strong 'red light,' (that of Burley's fire in the cavern), 'which, 'glancing in the waves of the falling water, and tinging 'them partially with crimson, had a strange preternatural 'and sinister effect when contrasted with the beams of 'the rising sun, which glanced on the first broken waves 'of the fall, though even its meridian splendour could not 'gain the third of its full depth.'—*Old Mortality*, last Vol. ch. 14.

A similar effect is thus again pointed out:

'The table at which the earl was seated was lighted 'with two lamps wrought in silver, shedding that un- 'pleasant and doubtful light which arises from the 'mingling of artificial lustre with that of general day- 'light.'—*Antiquary*, Vol. II. ch. 13.

The following moonlight scenes have great and very similar beauties.

'A sharp frost wind, which made itself heard and felt 'from time to time, removed the clouds of mist which 'might otherwise have slumbered till morning on the 'valley; and, though it could not totally disperse the 'clouds of vapour, yet threw them in confused and 'changeful masses, now hovering round the heads of the 'mountains, now filling, as with a dense and voluminous 'stream of smoke, the various deep gullies where masses 'of the composite rock, or brescia, tumbling in fragments 'from the cliffs, have rushed to the valley, leaving each 'behind its course a rent and torn ravine, resembling a 'deserted water-course. The moon, which was now high, 'and twinkled with all the vivacity of a frosty atmosphere, 'silvered the windings of the river, and the peaks and 'precipices which the mist left visible, while her beams 'seemed, as it were, absorbed by the fleecy whiteness of 'the mist, where it lay thick and condensed; and gave 'to the more light and vapoury specks, which were else- 'where visible, a sort of filmy transparency resembling 'the lightest veil of silver gauze.'—*Rob Roy*, Vol. III. ch. 6.

"Till when, through hills of azure borne,
The moon renew'd her silver horn,
Just at the time her waning ray
Had faded in the dawning day,
A summer mist arose;

Adown the vale the vapours float,
And cloudy undulations moat
That tufted mound of mystic note,
As round its base they close.
And higher now the fleecy tide
Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
Until the airy billows hide
The rock's majestic isle;
It seemed a veil of filmy lawn,
By some fantastic fairy drawn
Around enchanted pile.

" The breeze came softly down the brook,
And sighing as it blew,
The veil of silver mist it shook,
And to De Vaux's eager look
Renew'd that wondrous view:
For, though the loitering vapour braved
The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
Its mantle's dewy fold;
And, still, when shook that filmy screen,
Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
And Gothic battlements between
Their gloomy length unroll'd."

Bridal of Triermain, Canto III. St. 11, 12*.

The praise of truth, precision and distinctness, is not very frequently combined with that of extensive magnificence and splendid complication of imagery; yet how masterly, and often sublime, is the panoramic display in all these works, of vast and diversified scenery, and of crowded and tumultuous action! how brilliant and glowing are the land and sea prospects, the views, external

* I must also refer you here to two beautiful moonlight landscapes in Waverley, Vol. I. ch. 16. and the Heart of Mid Lothian, Vol. IV. ch. 9.

and internal, of majestic cities, the festivals, processions, and above all, the military evolutions and battles. Is it possible for language to depict more vividly, than in the following sentences, the agitation of a various and strongly contrasted assembly, on the verge of civil dissension?

'"To be a guest in the house where I should com-
'mand!' said the Templar, 'Never.—Chaplains, raise
'the psalm, *Quare fremuerunt Gentes?*—Knights, squires,
'and followers of the Holy Temple, prepare to follow the
'banner of *Beau-seant!*'

'The Grand Master spoke with a dignity which con-
'fronted even that of England's king himself, and inspired
'courage into his surprised and dismayed followers. They
'gathered around him like the sheep around the watch-
'dog, when they hear the baying of the wolf. But they
'evinced not the timidity of the scared flock—there were
'dark brows of defiance, and looks which menaced the
'hostility they dared not to proffer in words. They drew
'together in a dark line of spears, from which the white
'cloaks of the knights were visible among the dusky
'garments of their retainers, like the lighter coloured
'edges of a sable cloud. The multitude, who had raised
'a clamorous shout of reprobation, paused and gazed
'in silence on the formidable and experienced body to
'which they had unwarily bade defiance, and shrunk
'back from their front.

'The Earl of Essex, when he beheld them pause in
'their assembled force, dashed the rowels into his charger's
'side, and galloped backwards and forwards to array
'his followers, in opposition to a band so formidable.
'Richard alone, as if he loved the danger his presence had
'provoked, rode slowly along the front of the Templars,
'calling aloud, 'What, sirs! among so many gallant
'knights, will none dare splinter a spear with Richard?

'Sirs of the Temple! your ladies are but sun-burned, 'if they are not worth the shiver of a broken lance!'"—*Ivanhoe*, Vol. III. ch. 14.

A trace of the same hand may, perhaps, be discerned in these lines:

"Then uproar wild and misarray
Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
* * * * *
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep;
While on their rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar."

Lady of the Lake, Canto V. St. 27.

The marching of troops is a favourite theme with both writers; you will judge by the following extracts how far they differ in their conception of this subject:

"Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaimed the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border-pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
And measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

" Light forayers first, to view the ground,
Spurred their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle-blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen."
Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto IV. St. 13, 14.

'The Abbot, without reply, cast his eyes towards the 'path, or road, which, winding round the mountain, 'descends upon Kennaquhair from the southward. He 'beheld at a distance a cloud of dust, and heard the 'neighing of many horses, while the occasional sparkle 'of the long line of spears, as they came downwards into 'the valley, announced that the band came thither in arms.
* * * * * * * *
''They are Scottish men, when all is done,' exclaimed 'Edward—'I see the white crosses—it may be the Western 'Borderers, or Fernieherst and his clan.'
* * * * * * * *
'A distant trampling was at length heard, and the glance 'of spears was seen to shine through the trees above the 'village. The sounds increased and became more thick, 'one close continuous rushing sound, in which the tread 'of hoofs was mingled with the ringing of armour. The 'horsemen soon appeared at the principal entrance which 'leads into the irregular square, or market-place which 'forms the centre of the village.'—*Monastery,* Vol. III. ch. 12.

" Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread;
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?

Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?
I see the dagger crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
* * * * *
No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sullen march was dumb."

Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 15, 16.

'Their glimmering ranks were shortly afterwards seen 'in the distance, appearing and disappearing as the trees 'and the windings of the road permitted them to be 'visible, and distinguished chiefly by the flashes of light 'which their arms occasionally reflected against the sun. '.....The officers alone, with their colours and an 'escort to guard them, were seen to take the steep road 'up to the gate of the Tower, appearing by intervals as 'they gained the ascent, and again hidden by projections 'of the bank, and of the huge old trees with which it is 'covered. When they emerged from this narrow path, 'they found themselves in front of the old Tower.'—

Tales of My Landlord, 1st Series, Vol. II. ch. 11.

"Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing
Upon the eastern bank you see.

Still pouring down the rocky den
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still.
* * * * *
" Yet more! yet more! how fair array'd
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by!
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
St. George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly."
Marmion, Canto VI. St. 19. 21.

Of those occasional ornaments, for which a writer of genius will sometimes step aside from the direct course of narrative, the most remarkable in the works before us are the Similes, which are very frequent, and in general distinguished either by the poetic beauty and elegance of the images, or by the felicity, and even wittiness of the application. I will offer two or three specimens which appear to me excellent in both respects.

" Now must she see her lover strain,
At every turn, her feeble chain,
Watch to new bind each knot, and shrink
To view each fast-decaying link.
Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
Her vest to zone, her locks to braid;
Each varied pleasure heard her call,
The feast, the tourney, and the ball:
Her storied lore she next applies,
Taxing her mind to aid her eyes;

Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again;
Now, raptured, with each wish complying,
With feign'd reluctance now denying;
Each charm she varied to retain
A varying heart, and all in vain!

" Thus in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realm to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse and arbour decks the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way—
Vain art! vain hope! 'tis fruitless all!
At length we reach the bounding wall,
And sick of flower and trim-dress'd tree,
Long for rough glades and forest free."

Bridal of Triermain, Canto II. St. 4, 5.

'I feel the terrors of a child, who has, in heedless sport, 'put in motion some powerful piece of machinery; and 'while he beholds wheels revolving, chains clashing, 'cylinders rolling around him, is equally astonished at 'the tremendous powers which his weak agency has called 'into action, and terrified for the consequences which he 'is compelled to await, without the possibility of averting 'them.'—*Guy Mannering*, Vol. II. ch. 10.

" He smooth'd his brows, as best he might,
To the dread calm of autumn night,
When sinks the tempest's roar;

Yet still the cautious fishers eye
The clouds, and fear the gloomy sky,
And haul their barks on shore."

Harold the Dauntless, Canto II. St. 8.

'Neither was his eagerness proportioned in all cases 'to the motive of impulse, but might be compared to the 'speed of a stone, which rushes with like fury down the 'hill, whether it was first put in motion by the arm of a 'giant, or the hand of a boy.'—*Bride of Lammermoor*, Vol. I. ch. 8.

'The mind of England's Elizabeth....was like one of 'those ancient Druidical monuments, called Rocking-'stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could 'put her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules 'could not have destroyed their equilibrium.'—*Kenilworth*, Vol. III. ch. 9.

"My soul, though feminine, and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock."

Lady of the Lake, Canto IV. St. 10.

"They ——
Saw not nor heard the ambushment.
Heedless and unconcerned they sate,
While on the very verge of fate;
Heedless and unconcerned remained,
When Heaven the murderer's arm restrained;
As ships drift darkling down the tide,
Nor see the shelves o'er which they glide."

Rokeby, Canto IV. St. 27.

"Then Roderick from the Douglas broke:—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,

Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst in fierce jealousy to air."

Lady of the Lake, Canto II. St. 34.

'He' (the Regent Murray) 'then turned slowly round 'towards Roland Græme, and the marks of gaiety, real 'or assumed, disappeared from his countenance, as com- 'pletely as the passing bubbles leave the dark mirror of a 'still profound lake into which a traveller has cast a 'stone; in the course of a minute his noble features had 'assumed their natural expression of deep and even 'melancholy gravity.'—*Abbot*, Vol. II. ch. 3.

'It is probable the government' (of France in 1814-15) 'felt that their army resembled an evoked fiend, pressing 'for employment, and ready to tear to pieces even the 'wizard whom he serves, unless instantly supplied with 'other means of venting his malevolence.'—*Paul's Letters*, Letter IV.

I have noticed this comparison, because it seems to be a favourite. It occurs (as a quotation at least) in the life of Swift—

'Swift's mind was by one of his friends well likened to 'a conjured spirit, that would do mischief if not supplied 'with constant employment.'—Sect. I. p. 19. Ed. 1814.

And again in Waverley—

''I never see that surly fellow that dogs his heels,' 'said the Colonel....'but he reminds me of lines I have 'somewhere heard—upon the stage, I think;

——— "Close behind him
Stalks sullen Bertram, like a sorcerer's fiend,

Pressing to be employed*."

Waverley, Vol. III. ch. 9.

And the story of such a dæmon is told in a note on the Lay of the Last Minstrel (Canto II. St. 13), where we learn that Michael Scott at length conquered the fiend, by requiring him to make ropes of sand. I am well aware that the fiction itself has been made use of in various forms by English, French, and German writers; I only invite your attention here, to its frequent occurrence in the way of simile.

The following comparisons both turn upon the same thought—

" The bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
And, as the ancient art could stain
Achievements on the storied pane,
Irregularly traced and plann'd,
But yet so glowing and so grand;
So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat to renew," &c.

Marmion, Introduction to Canto V.

'The language of Scripture—gave, in Macbriar's exhortation, a rich and solemn effect, like that which is produced by the beams of the sun streaming through the storied representation of saints and martyrs on the Gothic window of some ancient cathedral.'—*Tales of My Landlord*, 1st Series, Vol. III. ch. 5.

It is a frequent practice of the novelist, and of the author of Marmion in all his productions, to pause a moment in

* I am not acquainted with these lines, but am inclined to think the Colonel's great-grandfather may have heard them at the Globe or Red Bull, when the " Old Play" was acted there.

his narrative or argument, for the purpose of delivering some moral or social maxim, suggested to his acute and reflecting mind by the subject before him. If I had not already left myself, I fear, without a claim to your further patience, it would be easy to produce many striking and varied examples of this sententious digression; but at present, I will refer only to that class which presents itself in simile or extended metaphor.

> "Joy shook his torch above the band,
> By many a various passion fann'd;—
> As elemental sparks can feed
> On essence pure or coarsest weed,
> Gentle, or stormy, or refined,
> Joy takes the colours of the mind."
>
> *Harold the Dauntless*, Canto V. St. 12.

'It seems as if great and violent grief or horror some-'times obscure the memory, and spread a cloud, like that 'of an exploding cannon, over the circumstances with 'which they are accompanied."—*Abbot*, vol. iii. ch. 5.

'Great men are as jealous of their thoughts as the wife 'of King Candaules was of her charms, and will as readily 'punish those who have, however involuntarily, beheld them 'in mental dishabille and exposure.'—*Abbot*, vol. ii. ch. 3.

A very ingenious, though somewhat inaccurate allusion.

'It is acutely argued by Dennis, in reply to Collier, 'that the depravity of the theatre, when revived, was 'owing to that very suppression, which had prevented its 'gradual reformation. And just so a muddy stream, if 'allowed its free course, will gradually purify itself, but if 'dammed up for a season, and let loose at once, its first 'torrent cannot fail to be impregnated with every impu-'rity.'—*Life of Dryden*, Sect. ii. p. 73, ed. 1808.

'In a free country the barriers of etiquette between the ranks of society are but frail and low, the regular gate is open, and the tax of admittance a trifle; and he who, out of mere wantonness, overleaps the fence, may be justly supposed not to have attained a philosophical indifference to the circumstance of being born in the excluded district.'—*Life of Swift*, Sect. iii. p. 137, ed. 1814.

'This fondness of our authors for simile has sometimes induced both to pursue it beyond the limits of correct taste. For example:

'The monk dropped into the natural train of pensive 'thought which these autumnal emblems of mortal hopes 'are peculiarly calculated to inspire. 'There,' he said, looking at the leaves which lay strewed around, 'lie the hopes 'of early youth first formed that they may soonest wither, 'and loveliest in spring to become most contemptible in 'winter; but you, ye lingerers,' added he, looking to a 'knot of beeches which still bore their withered leaves, ''you are the proud plans of adventurous manhood, formed 'later, and still clinging to the mind of age, although it 'acknowledges their inanity! None lasts, none endures, 'save the foliage of the hardy oak, which only begins to 'shew itself when that of the rest of the forest has enjoyed 'half its existence. A pale and decayed hue is all it pos-'sesses; but still it retains that symptom of vitality to the 'last.—So be it with father Eustace! The fairy hopes of 'my youth I have trodden under foot like those neglected 'rustlers—to the prouder dreams of my manhood I look 'back as to lofty chimeras, of which the pith and essence 'has long since faded; but my religious vows, the faithful 'profession which I have made in my maturer age, shall 'retain life while aught of Eustace lives.''—*Monastery*, Vol. I. ch. 8.

Such a lecture on leaves might have become the good father's lips well enough in a public address, but surely no man ever spun a thought so fine for his own particular edification. The following metaphor is, I think, carried one step too far—

'Ambition is often smothered when deprived of hope; 'but its restless ghost seldom fails to haunt those whom it 'has called vassals, and to excite them to animosity or 'vengeance, even after hope is no more.'—*Life of Swift*, Sect. vi. p. 360, ed. 1814.

That ambition dies for want of hope, and that its ghost appears to men afterwards, is matter amply sufficient for one metaphor; but when the author proceeds to state what that ghost says or does, we find ourselves unexpectedly embarked in an allegory, and resent the artifice while we own its ingenuity. The same observation will apply to the lines,

> "Within these walls, stifled by damp and stench,
> Doth Hope's fair torch expire; and at the snuff,
> Ere yet 'tis quite extinct, rude, wild, and wayward,
> The desperate revelries of wild despair,
> Kindling their hell-born cressets, light to deeds
> That the poor captive would have died ere practised,
> Till bondage sunk his soul to his condition."
>
> Prefixed to ch. 9, vol. ii. of Rob Roy, and said to be from '*The Prison*,' act 1. scene iii.

The next two similitudes have each a circumstance *de trop*.

'The hail-drops in her hair—were like the specks of 'white ashes on the twisted boughs of the blackened and 'half consumed oak."—*Tales of My Landlord*, 3d Series, Vol. IV. ch. 1, note.

'On the other side sat Isabella, pale as death, her long 'hair uncurled by the evening damps, and falling over 'her shoulders and breast, as the wet streamers droop 'from the mast when the storm has passed away and left 'the vessel stranded on the beach.'—*Black Dwarf*, ch. 17.

The following passages, though containing no simile, may be mentioned with propriety in this place, as displaying the same proneness to conceit and overstraining of thoughts—

——"Scattered lay the bones of men
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleach'd by drifting wind and rain.
* * * * *
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blind-worm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet flushed and full,
For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume."

Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 5.

"No, deep amid disjointed stones
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and briar in mid air staid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."

Ibid. Canto IV. St. 23.

A few such blemishes as these are not worthy to be

balanced against the splendid excellencies I have before endeavoured to enumerate; but the parallel between the novelist and minstrel becomes more complete, when it is shown that both are occasionally betrayed into a common fault by the morbid activity of an over-laboured imagination.

LETTER VII.

—— Novis——signatur cera figuris,
Nec manet ut fuerat, nec formas servat easdem,
Sed tamen ipsa eadem est.
Ovid. Met. Lib. XV. l. 169, &c.

Softly, my masters; is not this the tale
We heard from him o' the forest, that shrewd harper
With the brief northern name? Just so it ran, sure;
There was the knave that masked it in a cowl,
And stared away men's stomachs at their meat,
('Twas a mad jest); the old knight and his daughter;
(But he was then called Valentine, she Isabel)
The youth that loved two maidens, fought for both, too;
And the crazed wench that wander'd on the hills
All pale and faded, like the languid moon
By day seen slumbering o'er a misty stream.
Go thy ways, wag, do'st think we hear a story
And take no note on't?

OLD PLAY.

WE enter now, Sir, upon a narrower field of criticism. Our attention has hitherto been directed to general characteristics; to the prevailing spirit of works collectively considered, rather than to the peculiar turn of separate productions. In the comparison which remains to be made of particular stories, incidents, and phrases, I think I shall be able to point out some resemblances so striking and undeniable, that it will almost appear a waste of

labour to have urged any argument derived from other topics. But occasional and partial coincidences, however pointed, may sometimes fail of producing absolute conviction; similarity of fable, or of language, may be imputed to chance, to the necessary tendency of the subject, to inadvertent plagiarism, or to voluntary imitation. It is only when there appears, as I have endeavoured to show in the present instance, a manifest conformity of general character, that minute and detached correspondencies can be undoubtingly relied on, not as the beginnings of presumption, but as the crown and consummation of proof.

It cannot, I think, be necessary to introduce the ensuing remarks by any extended criticism on the construction and management of fable, as exemplified in the productions, collectively taken, of the novelist or poet. This subject has already been touched upon, and all its most important points will be embraced by the observations to which we are proceeding.

The circumstance in which the novels and poems most generally coincide is, a close connexion of the story with historic truth and topographical reality. Each tale is in fact an essay on the manners and political state of England or Scotland at a given period, as well as a narrative of romantic adventures. Most of the novels, indeed, are professedly constructed on this plan. To praise the correctness of either writer in assigning to each particular age, country, and class of people its proper habits and usages, social forms and ways of thinking, would be an insufficient as well as needless commendation; for they always treat of these subjects, not merely with accuracy, but with a learned exuberance, nay gratuitous prodigality of illustration, which can only be afforded by industry enamoured of its task.

It is remarkable in the novels as well as poems, that the

author, while he traces an accurate and comprehensive general picture of the times, often shows great judgment also in selecting some one peculiarity, some striking custom, fashion, or mode of life, to stand as a principal object in the foreground. The Border gathering, in the Lay of the Last Minstrel; the Chapter at Holy Island, in Marmion; the circulating of the Fiery Cross, in the Lady of the Lake; the Highland feast and stag hunt, in Waverley*; the tournament, in Ivanhoe; and the Masque of Unreason, in the Abbot†; are among the detached subjects of archæological curiosity, which have been thus ingeniously turned to advantage: the moss-trooper and the Liddesdale yeoman, in the poem first mentioned; the buccaneer, in Rokeby; the Blue-gown, in the Antiquary; the Covenanters, in Old Mortality; and the soldier of fortune, in a Legend of Montrose, are specimens of character singled out in the same manner to fill central places in the various pictures of society to which they belong, and form leading points of the composition.

There is not, I believe, a single tale of either writer (except perhaps Guy Mannering) in which the adventures have not some connexion, more or less direct, with public affairs. In all the metrical romances, and nearly all the novels, a material part of the interest hinges on some popular insurrection, tumult, or civil war. In more than half the novels, and most of the poems, events important to the story are made to depend on the issue of a siege or battle, which is described, I need not again say with what vigour and animation. The political and moral surveys, whether national or local, and the views of individual character and conduct, as forming a portion of history, are in all these

* Vol. i. ch. 20.; ii. ch. 1. † Vol. i. ch. 14.

productions much more learned and profound than the nature of such fiction requires; and the authors not only labour that their narratives may coincide with the grand outline of recorded events, but endeavour to render the *traisemblance* still more pointed by their attention to minute details of provincial and family tradition.

In most (if not all) of the novels, and in the poems without exception, we find some real place marked out as the principal scene of events; a fact sufficiently impressed upon the minds of those

> "Travellers from southern fields,
> Whether in tilbury, barouche, or mail*,"

who have periodically halted after the romantic Muse from castle to abbey, and from highland to island. Both writers show a singular address in making use of their local knowledge; their incidents are contrived with an accurate consideration of distances and the relative position of places, which gives the whole fable an imposing air of truth; and the natural features and artificial embellishments of the region, whether softness, or sublimity, or antique majesty, be their distinctive character, are celebrated with such warmth of feeling and yet justness of observation, that the narrative gains richness, point, and energy from poetic description, which, in other hands, too often introduces only feebleness and incoherence. By a singular versatility of imagination, both writers appear to become naturalized at will in any spot with which it pleases them to connect their story. Local allusions, whether to events or objects, or to persons and families with which these are

* Harold the Dauntless, canto vi. st. 1.

connected, come from them with an artless facility, and glide into discourse with a frequency and unforced readiness that might at first sight be deemed the genuine result of early and long-cherished associations, if we did not know with what success both novelist and poet have exercised the same talent of appearing at home through the whole extent of their romantic excursions, from Angus to Galloway, from Kenilworth to Loch Katrine, from the Vale of Don to the Sound of Mull.

In those few novels where the principal scenes of action are denoted by fictitious names, the topographical details are not more vague or inconsistent on that account; but, on the contrary, are laid down with a circumstantial exactness, which often leads us to presume, and sometimes to conclude undoubtingly, that real places are intended. Thus we may, I suppose, pronounce, without fear of mistake, that Fairport* means Arbroath, and that the novelist's Kennaquhair† is the place by men called Melrose‡. The

* Antiquary. † Monastery and Abbot.

‡ It is true the abbey of Kennaquhair is mentioned in the first chapter of the Monastery, as 'founded in the same reign' with Melrose, Jedburgh, and Kelso; an expression which appears to discountenance this conjecture. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the antiquities of Roxburghshire to know, whether there exist in that county more than one magnificent ruin of a religious structure dedicated to St. Mary, founded by David the First, in a rich Gothic style (see The Abbot, vol. i. ch. 13), having curiously ornamented cloisters (Ibid. and Monastery, vol. iii. ch. 9), bordering on the Tweed, in a serpentine part of its course, and near a ford (Ibid. ch. 1, 5), overshadowed by mountains on the southward (Ibid. vol. iii. ch. 4), giving celebrity by its ruins to a neighbouring village, and said to have anciently enjoyed nearly two thousand pounds in yearly money-

true situation of Warroch Point * is, I believe, like that of the old Thule, a subject still occasionally debated; but there are, no doubt, enough of provincial virtuosi who could, if consulted, elucidate this subject; and we might probably, by a similar application, ascertain the exact site and work-day names of Wolf's-hope† and Westburn flat‡, Glennaquoich§, Tully-Veolan§, and Tillietudlem ||.

It has often surprised me, that no ingenious person should ever have turned his mind to the compilation of a romantic gazetteer, containing an account of all the places mentioned in fictitious history, and noticing the occasions on which they became illustrious, their vulgar and poetic appellations, and the works in which they have figured. A collection of this kind would become peculiarly interesting, if accompanied by maps constructed from the surveys and calculations of experienced novel-readers, exhibiting, in a conspicuous manner, the most celebrated parks, lodges, cottages, chateaux, castles (distinguishing the haunted from the unhaunted), convents, hermitages, and caverns; and referring by appropriate signs to the most remarkable occurrences. Thus a pair of swords, or a cloud of smoke, would denote a duel; the place in which a hero first saw his heroine, might be distinguished by an arrow; a dagger would signify indiscriminately an assassination, or a lady's

rent (Introductory Epistle to the Monastery); but it is certain that all these particulars apply to Melrose, and it may be worth notice, that the family name of most importance in the two novels just cited occurs in the records of that religious establishment, where Robert Avenel is mentioned as 'familiaris noster.' —See Chalmers's *Caledonia*, vol. ii. ch. ii. sec. 8. note (y).

* Guy Mannering. † Bride of Lammermoor.

‡ Black Dwarf. § Waverley. || Old Mortality.

unkindness; and a hand would point to the scene of a scandalous adventure. The wanderings of enterprising champions or banished lovers, might be laid down in separate charts, the fleur-de-lys always pointing to the abode of Dulcinea. And it would be an exercise of great ingenuity to mark, with geographical distinctness, the changes which have been wrought at various times in the political divisions and natural aspect of our globe, by writers of lofty imagination and uncompromising temper; when they have conveyed cities and provinces from master to master without a blow struck or objection hinted; established road-steads in the heart of continents, and carried inland places to the sea-side; abolished old countries and introduced new; peopled deserts, dried up rivers, created lakes and islands with a more than volcanic facility, melted down mountains without fire or vinegar, and, in short, produced more strange distortions in the face of our planet than ever haunted the geologic reveries of Hutton or Werner.

But I am losing sight of the authors of Marmion and Waverley, and entreat your forgiveness of this idle digression.

Supposing the novelist to be the same writer with the poet, it was not to be expected that he should frequently return, in his prose compositions, to the very ground on which he had laid the scene of his poetic fictions. But we may often find both hovering round the same region, and sometimes alighting on the same spot. The Scottish Border, for example, which was rendered famous as a land of romantic adventure by The Lay of the Last Minstrel, is also resorted to by the novelist in Guy Mannering, Rob Roy, The Black Dwarf, The Monastery, and The Abbot: and in the last two novels, if I am not mistaken, we meet the

triumph, the venerable precinct of Melrose. Those places in the south-eastern corner of Scotland, which are celebrated in Marmion, have not, as far as I recollect, been particularly noticed in the novels; but the district of Lammermoor, and that adjoining the Cheviots, are made the scene of many interesting events*. Edinburgh, with its romantic environs and magnificent approaches, is largely and enthusiastically celebrated in Marmion, Waverley, Guy Mannering, The Heart of Mid-Lothian, and The Abbot. Loch Katrine is barely named by the novelist, but he has expatiated on the beauties of its near neighbour, Loch-Ard, and associated them with adventures of the most powerful interest†. Indeed, all the haunts of the Mac-Gregors are so near in situation, and congenial in character, to those of the Clan Alpine, that we scarcely feel ourselves on different ground, while contemplating the Highland scenes in Rob Roy, from that with which the Lady of the Lake has long ago made us familiar. Both writers have occasionally‡ led us into the county of York, though, it must be owned, in widely different directions. The Bridal of Triermain is a Cumberland story; and we visit Cumberland again in Waverley, Guy Mannering, and the Heart of Mid-Lothian. The sublime Hebridean Archipelago is as yet unentered by the novelist; but he, as well as the poet, extols with great ardour, and in language forcibly descriptive, the enchanted isles and shores and waters of the Firth of Clyde, and the savage grandeur of Arran§.

* Bride of Lammermoor. Rob Roy.

† Rob Roy, vol. iii.

‡ As in Ivanhoe, Rokeby, and The Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. iii.

§ Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. iv. c. 5, &c. Lord of the

To gain a pretext for dwelling on topographical details, and to make the reader engage himself in them, without feeling that the narrative languishes or deviates, both writers commonly represent some intelligent stranger (the hero, or at least a principal personage of the story) as entering for the first time into the region which is to be described, and surveying its peculiarities with a traveller's curiosity, and with such other feelings as belong to his supposed character. Thus the poet leads King James astray through the Trosachs to the foot of Loch Katrine; makes Marmion pause at the various remarkable points of his progress from Norham to Edinburgh; sends Arthur in quest of adventures amidst the Cumberland mountains*; and carries Bruce and his party among the majestic Hebrides, and into the wilds of Skye†. And thus the novelist conducts us, in company with Edward Waverley, to the Braes of Angus and the Perthshire highlands: with Henry Bertram we journey from Cumberland into Liddesdale; with Lovel explore the counties beyond the Queen's-ferry; with Francis Osbaldistone visit Northumberland, proceed to Glasgow, and penetrate into Rob Roy's country; with Jeanie Deans perform a pilgrimage from Edinburgh to London, and from London to the Clyde's mouth; with Captain Dalgetty perambulate the territory of M'Callum-more; and travel with Roland Graeme from the English Border to the capital of Scotland, up the Firth of Forth and across Fife to fair Loch-Leven.

Isles, canto iv. st. 13, &c., v. st. 6, 7, 12, 13, &c. The scenery of Arran, worthy to be celebrated by such a writer, is mentioned with high praise in the notes to this poem, as well as in the text. Canto v. note 1.

* Bridal of Triermain, canto i.

† Lord of the Isles, canto iii. st. 13, &c.

The dramatic character predominant in the stories of both these authors is a point of resemblance which has already been treated of, perhaps at too much length. I must however add here, that the propensity of both to this style of composition is evinced not only by a constant introduction of dialogue, but, still more remarkably, by a frequent use of soliloquies. In works properly dramatic, such an expedient is often indispensable for the communication of thoughts, purposes, or even facts, which could not otherwise be made known; but in novels and romances it is neither necessary, nor strikingly advantageous, nor very commonly resorted to; and is, therefore, the more worthy of notice as a peculiarity, when many times repeated.

There is scarcely a tale of either the poet or the novelist which does not afford examples of set soliloquy. For our present purpose it will be sufficient to point out in particular those of Marmion at the Scottish inn, and after leaving Tantallon*; of Fitz-James, on first viewing Loch Katrine; of Douglas, on his approach to Stirling†; of Edmund, when returning to the robbers' cave after the attack on Rokeby Castle‡; and of Bruce, on the eve of his departure from Arran§; those of Waverley, when informed by Fergus of his intended suit to Miss Bradwardine‖; of Henry Bertram, on first revisiting Ellangowan; of Glossin, while watching the escape of Hatteraick¶; of the Black Dwarf, after his interview with Westburnflat**; of Ravens-

* Marmion, canto iii. st. 17. canto vi. st. 17.

† Lady of the Lake, canto i. st. 15, 16. canto v. st. 20.

‡ Rokeby, canto vi. st. 5.

§ Lord of the Isles, canto iv. st. 30.

‖ Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 7.

¶ Guy Mannering, vol. iii. ch. 2. ii. ch. 12.

** Black Dwarf, ch. 6.

wood, after receiving the Lord Keeper under his roof *, of Abbot Boniface, on the tranquillity of his early days, compared with his present troublesome dignity; of Father Eustace on the withered leaves in Glendearg †; of Leicester, while perusing his future fortunes in the starry heaven; and of Varney, when setting out for Cumnor, with the Earl's message to his lady ‡. It would require but a moment's recollection to double the number of instances; but I will detain you no longer on this point, except to notice the following short speech of Dousterswivel, where that personage, in the true style of the theatre, talks broken English to himself. 'But, ah! it is all nonsense; all one part 'of de damn big trick and imposture. Deivil! that one 'thick-sculled Scotch baronet, as I have led by the nose for 'five years, should cheat Herman Dousterswivel!'—*Antiquary*, vol. ii. ch. 10.

As the beauty of these tales is often enhanced by their admirable dramatic effect, so too they occasionally lose in elegance and simplicity by an over-ambitious seeking after what are technically called coups-de-theatre. There are some, I will not say many passages of both writers, in which either the transactions themselves are so remote from common nature, or the coincidences of time, place, situation of parties, and other accidents, are contrived with such apparent study, and so much previous sacrifice of probability, that the scene when fully opened appears not properly dramatic, but melo-dramatic.

In Ivanhoe, when the castle of Front-de-bœuf is wrapped in flames, and its besiegers stand waiting its downfall, be-

* Bride of Lammermoor, vol. ii. c. 1.

† Monastery, vol. i. c. 6, 8.

‡ Kenilworth, vol. ii. c. 9.

hold! the Saxon Ulrica, by whose hand the conflagration was kindled, appears on a turret, 'in the guise of one of the 'ancient furies, yelling forth a war-song,' her hair dishevelled, and insanity in her eyes. Brandishing her distaff, she stands (like Fawdoun's Ghost), among the crashing towers, till, having finished several stanzas of her barbarous hymn, she at last sinks among the fiery ruins*. The whole incident is described with much spirit, and may not be inconsistent with manners and customs at some time prevalent in our country: it would, no doubt, have made the fortune of a common romance; but in such a work as Ivanhoe, it appears, I think, too glaring and meretricious an ornament, and too much in the taste of the Miller and his Men. The same melo-dramatic turn is observable in that striking passage of The Lady of the Lake, where a Saxon soldier is employed, during the battle at Loch Katrine, to bring off a boat from the island on which Sir Roderick's clansmen have placed their wives and families:

——————"He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came:
It tinged the waves and strand with flame.—
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleam'd in her hand:
It darkened—but amid the moan,
Of waves, I heard a dying groan;—
Another flash!—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats;
And the stern Matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

Lady of the Lake, canto vi. st. 20.

* Vol. iii. ch. 1.

An incident of the same class, and remarkable both for its fantastic effect, and for the improbable means and abrupt manner of its accomplishment, is the interruption of Miss Vere's marriage, by the Black Dwarf issuing from behind a monument in the family chapel, and proclaiming himself the rightful lord of Ellieslaw, his pretensions being supported by a party who had opportunely assembled in arms for another purpose, at the moment when their aid was wanted in this adventure; and the plot having been still further assisted by the castle doors standing all open, and the servants being all intoxicated*. Another scene of the same character occurs in Rokeby†, where Philip Mortham, supposed to have been assassinated at Marston-Moor, starts up from behind the tomb of his wife exactly in time to parry the stab which Risingham aims at Wilfrid.

To vary narrative by the introduction of detached lyrical pieces, is a practice resorted to with characteristic frequency by the poet, and occasionally, though more sparingly, adopted by the novelist. In this, too, both, at times, become a little theatrical. The scene contrived for Waverley by Miss Mac-Ivor, at the cascade, where, after terrifying the Southron by a display of her activity in walking 'over four-inched bridges,' she seats herself on a mossy fragment of rock, at a convenient distance from the waterfall, and touching her harp, pours forth a long but spirited Jacobite invocation‡, is got up with too evident an attention to stage effect; and the performance of Ellen Douglas before Fitz-James, under circumstances not very dissimilar§, has some-

* Black Dwarf, ch. 18. † Canto ii. st. 17 to 21.

‡ Waverley, vol. i. ch. 22.

§ Lady of the Lake, canto i. st. 30 to 32:—

"She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day."—st. 32.

thing of the same fault. We now and then find entire songs, deliberately executed in situations which are usually (except in operas,) considered the most uninviting to vocal exhibition. Thus, in the Lady of the Lake, a bridegroom summoned away in the midst of the nuptial ceremony, to forward Sir Roderick's fiery cross, breaks out in 'voluntary song,' and completes three long stanzas of the impromptu, while 'glancing o'er bank and brae,' with the speed of 'fire from flint*.' And, I have already mentioned the passage of Ivanhoe, where the Saxon virago chaunts fifty lines of martial poetry from the top of a burning castle in which she is about to perish.

"It has been frequently noticed as a fault in the stories of both these authors, that the hero (by which name, according to romantic etiquette, we are to understand the personage who marries the heroine), is not sufficiently important, and fails to maintain his legitimate pre-eminence above the other characters. This deficiency is, I think, attributable, in different instances, to different causes, and not uniformly to the same, as critics seem to have assumed, who lay the whole blame on the general faultlessness or inactivity of these nominal heroes.

Waverley having caused inquiry to be made respecting the expressions applied to himself by Fergus's Celtic bard, 'Una returned in a few minutes, and repeated to her mistress a few lines in Gaelic. Flora seemed to think for a moment, and then slightly colouring, she turned to Waverley—'it is impossible to gratify your curiosity, Captain Waverley, without exposing my own presumption. If you will give me a few moments for consideration, I will endeavour to engraft the meaning of these lines upon a rude English translation,'" &c.—*Waverley*, vol. i. ch. 22.

* Canto iii. st. 22, 3.

One circumstance very common in the novels and poems, and highly disadvantageous to the principal personage, is, that during a great part of the story, he is made the blind or involuntary instrument of another's purposes; the attendant on another's will; and the sport of events over which he exercises no controul. Such, for example, is Waverley; a hero, who, from beginning to end of his history, is scarcely ever left upon his own hands, but appears almost always in the situation of pupil, guest, patient, protégé, or prisoner; engaged in a quarrel from which he is unconsciously extricated; half duped and half seduced into rebellion; ineffectually repenting; snatched away by accident from his sinking party; by accident preserved from justice; and restored by the exertions of his friends to safety, fortune, and happiness. Such a hero is De Wilton, who is introduced to us as the vanquished rival of Marmion, becomes by mere chance the Baron's attendant and guide, and obtains in his execution of that office the means and opportunity of achieving the few acts we find recorded of him. Malcolm Græme, in the Lady of the Lake, is a royal ward, without command of vassals or lands; makes a truant expedition (for a generous purpose, indeed), to Loch Katrine, where he hears the proposal of Roderick Dhu for the hand of Ellen discussed and rejected without his interference draws on a momentary quarrel with the chieftain, by a somewhat unseasonable act of gallantry, incurs the rebuke of Douglas, and returning homewards, is consigned to prison, from which he is released at the end of the story by his mistress's interest with the Monarch. Henry Bertram might justly claim to be the hero of Guy Mannering, if perils, labours, and courageous achievements, could of themselves confer such a dignity; but it is difficult to consider him in that light, because we see him the mere king of a chess-

board, advanced, withdrawn, exposed, protected, at the pleasure of those who play the game over his head. The character of Francis Osbaldistone is not too insipidly immaculate to engage sympathy or awaken curiosity, but it wants that commanding interest which should surround the first personage of a novel; and the reason is, that in almost every part of the story we find him played upon as a dupe, disposed of as a captive, tutored as a novice, and unwittingly exciting indignation as a Marplot. Omitting other instances of the same kind, I will produce one character for the purpose of contrast. The Master of Ravenswood* performs fewer feats of knight-errantry than any of the worthies I have mentioned, except, perhaps, Malcolm Græme; to shoot a bull, to cross swords with Bucklaw, to stare down and buffet Craigengelt; and (a more desperate venture than any) to brave the acrimony of Lady Ashton, forms, I think, the sum of his achievements. Yet no individual in any of the novels or poems more completely maintains his pre-eminence as the hero; for the whole action depends upon, and centres in him: his ruling influence is always felt, whether he be absent or present; and of all the passions, whether hatred, love, admiration, hope, or fear, which vary and animate the successive scenes, he is the grand, ultimate, and paramount object.

It is also the misfortune of many heroes in these works, to be constantly thrown into shade by some more prominent character. This is particularly the case with De Wilton and Græme; with Redmond O'Neale in Rokeby, who shrinks to a mere idle stripling, beside the dignified Mortham, and the awful barbarian Risingham; with Ronald of the Isles, who throughout the tale which takes its name from

* Bride of Lammermoor.—Tales of my Landlord, 3d Series.

him, is evidently a subordinate agent to the real hero, Robert Bruce; with Waverley, with Henry Bertram, with Francis Osbaldistone, who plays a second part to Diana Vernon, to Baillie Jarvie, to Rob Roy, and even to Rashleigh; with Ivanhoe, whose best gifts dwindle to insignificance before the prowess and magnanimity of Richard, and the sense and fortitude of Rebecca: but such is not the predicament of Ravenswood, who preserves the same majestic ascendency over all the various characters, of whatever quality, humour, or disposition, with whom he is placed in contact.

Another circumstance, which has operated to the prejudice of several very promising heroes, is, their being suffered to remain so long inactive, as entirely to forfeit their importance, and almost to run the risk of being forgotten by slow or forgetful readers. Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, and Lovel in the Antiquary, are placed in this situation; and Malcolm Græme continues in retirement till we hardly wish for his return.

But there is an error, if possible, still more fatal, which both the novelist and the poet have incautiously committed in more than one instance. It is in vain that the hero is kept almost perpetually in view, that he seeks desperate adventures, and defies danger and hardship; in vain that he moves conspicuous, nay, pre-eminent, in most scenes, and in many, engrosses our whole anxiety—if, upon some one important occasion, when the great interests of the story are at stake, and our concern in the action is wound up to its highest pitch, he is permitted to be absent, or, still worse, to stand by as an idle spectator. Heroic importance, like political influence, or female ascendency, must be guarded with incessant care, for a moment's rivalry may sometimes be fatal.

In all the works of the novelist, there is no character of

the same class more vigorously drawn, or more variously illustrated, than that of Henry Morton: his qualities are such as at once compel our sympathy and command our respect; and many principal events of the story receive their whole impulse and direction from his will. But, during those scenes with the insurgents at Drumclog, those scenes so animated and intensely agitating, that I doubt if they have ever been surpassed by the present or any other fabulous writer, Henry Morton is quietly seated on a hill, awaiting the event, and only contrives at the close of the engagement to incur some danger by interposing in behalf of Lord Evandale. When the resolution is taken to defend the castle of Tillietudlem, that moment, at which, perhaps, the interest of the story arrives at its highest point, Henry Morton is hearing sermons in the fanatical camp. When his fellow-rebels appear before the council, and the enthusiast Macbriar is enduring torture with a martyr's constancy, Henry Morton is standing aloof, with his pardon in his hand, though not an unconcerned, yet a passive spectator. When the gallant Evandale falls a victim to his own high spirit, and the baseness of his enemies, Henry Morton, though hastening to his rescue, comes too late to succour, or to assist personally in avenging him. Thus, at several of the most important conjunctures, our whole interest and sympathy are demanded for Claverhouse, for Bothwell, for Cornet Grahame, for Lord Evandale, and for the Covenanters; while for Morton, we have only the observation of Henri IV. to the brave Crillon, 'Tu n'y étois pas.'

Malcolm Græme is the 'brave Crillon' of the Lady of the Lake; Roderick Dhu is vanquished; Malcolm is not there; a battle is fought at Loch Katrine; he is not there; Douglas mixes in the royal sports, offends the king, and is borne off a prisoner, Malcolm is not there; the fair Ellen

makes her way through the soldiery at Stirling Castle, and presses for access to the monarch; Malcolm is not there. The protracted and total inactivity of a hero himself is not so fatal to his credit as the exploits performed by others without his participation. De Wilton is the Crillon of Flodden Field. In the magnificent and energetic description of that battle, our enthusiasm is excited for Surrey, Stanley, Tunstall, Dacres, we hang in suspense on the fates of Marmion, plunge eagerly into the fight with Blount and Fitz-Eustace, and look with sympathy and admiration on the deserted Clare. But when the damsel naturally asks, 'Is Wilton 'there?' the poet does not care to give an answer; and it matters little that after the battle is over, the slain buried, and the funeral oration spoken, we are charged, on pain of being set down as 'dull elves *,' to believe, that 'Turk 'Gregory never did such deeds in arms †,' as this same De Wilton.

The character of Ivanhoe again suffers more in my opinion, by his quiescence during the storming of Torquilstone, than it gains by his gallant bearing at Ashby, or his truly chivalrous self-devotion in the lists at Templestowe; and Waverley sinks into absolute insignificance, by sustaining only the part of a common spectator in the highly tragic scene of Mac-Ivor's and Evan Dhu's condemnation.

There is, I think, in the minds of most readers, a natural, and not ungenerous prejudice against him, who, by whatever means, escapes from the disaster in which his party or friends are involved, and is seen enjoying security, or even pursuing his way to happiness, while they encounter their fate. Our affections and sympathies obstinately adhere to

* See canto vi. st. 38.

† Henry IV. Part I. act v. sc. 3.

the falling, more especially if they fall bravely and becomingly; we are disposed, at the same time, to entertain something like contempt for the inglorious safety of those who survive the ruin; and to cry out, like the indignant father of the last remaining Horatius, "Qu'il mourût*!" The contrast of Henry Morton, pardoned by the government, and pursuing his fortune in Holland, with Macbriar tortured and put to death, with Burley, a wanderer in the desert hills, and with so many other associates of their rebellion slain, persecuted, and proscribed, is almost fatal to the romantic interest of his character: and I do not know that I have ever cordially forgiven Waverley for not being hanged with Fergus Mac-Ivor; though the chieftain, it must be owned, had by far the stronger vocation to that destiny.

It would perhaps be too much to pronounce in general, that the dignity of a hero is compromised by his cherishing an unrequited passion. In subordinate personages, as Wilfrid in Rokeby, Lord Evandale in Old Mortality, and Edward Glendinning in the Monastery, disappointment of this kind has an effect by no means ungraceful, nor is it any serious disparagement, even to the principal character, to be once denied, if ultimately successful, like Lovel in The Antiquary. But I think the hero appears in no very flattering light, when, after neglecting a lady who was willing to be won, for the sake of some haughtier beauty, he finds his suit rejected, not for the sake of any earlier lover, but from mere disinclination, and at length, despairing of success, returns for consolation to the once slighted but still compassionate fair one,—

* Corneille. Horace, acte iii. sc. 6.

"Flava excutitur Chloë,
Rejectæque patet janua Lydiæ *."

This proceeding, however frequent it may be in actual life, is not, I believe, very common in romance, and we may therefore observe, as a remarkable coincidence, that the whole story, exactly as I have given it, occurs once at least in the poems, and again in the novels. The Lord of the Isles, beloved by Edith, to whom he has long been contracted, takes advantage of a somewhat unhandsome pretext, to throw off his engagement, and prefers his suit to Isabel, the sister of Bruce; but when the lady has declined his addresses and retired into a convent, he begins to perceive the merit of her affronted rival; then

——" dwells he on" her "juster claims,
And oft his breach of faith he blames †,"

and at length he decently resigns himself to her disposal on the field of Bannockburn. The situation of Waverley with Miss Bradwardine and Flora Mac-Ivor is precisely the same, except that in this case there is no violated contract. The rejection here is accompanied with some appearance of contempt for the gallant's character; and in both instances the inflexible damsel is so sincerely indifferent, that she exerts considerable industry in promoting the revolt of her admirer.

In Harold the Dauntless, a story not otherwise resembling either of those last mentioned, the patient Eivir makes prize of the hero's rugged heart, after he has failed in his courtship to the outlaw's daughter.

* Hor. lib. iii. od. 9.

† Lord of the Isles, canto vi. st. 6.

There is one peculiar circumstance which, from its frequent repetition in the stories of both writers, may be justly noted as characteristic; and I mention it in this place, because it often serves to counterbalance, in some degree, the effect of those incidents which have been pointed out as diminishing the hero's importance.

I have already praised the address with which both writers conduct their quarrels, and the skill and apparent experience in the use of arms displayed in their single combats. In almost every tale some conflict of this kind occurs, exciting a powerful interest both by the manner in which it is related, and by the momentous consequences depending on its issue. But it is still more remarkable that both the author of Waverley and the author of Marmion repeatedly (though, I believe, unconscious themselves of reiterating the same idea) introduce a personal struggle between two individuals whose characters form nearly the same contrast as those of Zerbino and Mandricardo, or Ruggiero and Rodomonte; the one (usually the hero of the story) a preux chevalier; gallant, courteous, accomplished, and beloved; the other fierce, rude, and lawless, possessing a giant's strength, and using it like a giant, yet so far respectable for his prowess, or recommended by some wild and irregular virtues, that we cannot look upon his fall with absolute unconcern. The gentler knight always proves victorious, or at least comes out of the conflict with honour.

The most celebrated and striking incidents of this kind in the poems are the momentary encounter of Malcolm Græme with Roderick Dhu, and the Chieftain's combat with Fitz-James*. Of the same class are Wilfrid's struggle

* Lady of the Lake, canto ii. st. 34, &c. Canto v. st. 12, &c.

with Risingham, and the engagement at Rokeby, where Redmond and Wilfrid are both opposed to the redoubted free-booter *. To these instances we may add the skirmish between Baron Cranstoun, the fair Margaret's true knight, and the hardy moss-trooper, William of Deloraine. Let me now beg you to observe how the same kind of interest is excited in the novels by the same means. Ivanhoe is more than once the adversary of Bois-Guilbert; Morton grapples with the ferocious Burley †; and Henry Bertram (not indeed single-handed) with the Dutch Caliban Dirk Hatteraick ‡. In A Legend of Montrose, the courteous Menteith is furiously defied to combat by M'Aulay, but the Highlander's frantic impatience brings the quarrel to a premature issue §. The hostile meeting of Lovel with the fiery and insolent M'Intyre is an adventure differing in some of its circumstances from those I have just mentioned, but deriving all its strength of effect from the same opposition of a fierce, violent, and overbearing, to a mild, just, and temperate character ||. It is true that in this instance both the champions are gentlemen, natives of one country, and educated in similar habits; but every romance-reader knows that a story may have its Saracen without whiskers or turban, and the hero be menaced or the heroine disquieted by an Orson in epaulettes, or a Loupgarou de société. Again, Waverley finds an antagonist in Fergus M'Ivor ¶, and the skill and courage of Francis Osbaldistone

* Rokeby, canto ii. st. 20. Canto v. 33, &c.

† Old Mortality, last vol. ch. 14.

‡ Guy Mannering, vol. iii. ch. 15.

§ Legend of Montrose, last chapter.

|| Antiquary, vol. ii. ch. 4, 5.

¶ Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 11.

are fearfully tasked by the malignity and ruffianly swordsmanship of Rashleigh*.

I have already, in criticizing the dialogue of these authors, passed a just but imperfect encomium on their talent for the delineation of character. In the works of men uniting such copiousness of invention with such nicety of discrimination, we must not expect, as in the productions of inferior writers, to find the same individual repeatedly brought upon the scene under a new name: but we may often discern a general family likeness between personages of the same class in the novels and poems; and there are some instances of close partial resemblance, to which I shall solicit your attention.

But before we proceed to more particular comparison, I cannot help dwelling for a moment on the great similarity of manner apparent in the female portraits of the two writers. The pictures of their heroines are executed with a peculiar fineness, delicacy, and minuteness of touch, and with a care at times almost amounting to timidity, so that they generally appear more highly finished, but less boldly and strikingly thrown out, than the figures with which they are surrounded. Their elegance and purity are always admirable, and are happily combined, in most instances, with unaffected ease and natural spirit. Strong practical sense is their most prevailing characteristic, unaccompanied by any repulsive air of selfishness, pedantry, or feminine harshness. Few writers have ever evinced, in so strong a degree as the authors of Marmion and Waverley, that manly regard, and dignified but enthusiastic devotion, which may be expressed by the term loyalty to the fair sex, the honourable attribute of chivalrous and romantic ages. If they touch

* Rob Roy, vol. ii. ch. 12.

on the faults of womankind, their satire is playful, not contemptuous; and their acquaintance with female manners, graces, and foibles is apparently drawn, not from libertine experience, but from the guileless familiarity of domestic life.

Of all human ties and connexions there is none so frequently brought in view, or adorned with so many touches of the most affecting eloquence by both these writers, as the pure and tender relation of father and daughter. Douglas and Ellen in the Lady of the Lake will immediately occur to you as a distinguished example. Their mutual affection and solicitude; their pride in each other's excellencies; the parent's regret of the obscurity to which fate has doomed his child; and the daughter's self-devotion to her father's welfare and safety, constitute the highest interest of the poem, and that which is most uniformly sustained; nor does this or any other romance of the same author contain a finer stroke of passion than the overboiling of Douglas's wrath, when, mixed as a stranger with the crowd at Stirling, he sees his daughter's favourite Lufra chastised by the royal huntsman.

"The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short;
Came up, and with his leash unbound,
In anger struck the noble hound.
—The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd:
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed;
And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck,
In maiden glee, with garlands deck:

They were such play-mates, that with name
Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride.
Needs but a buffet, and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore:
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

Lady of the Lake, Canto V. St. 25.

In Rokeby the filial attachment and duteous anxieties of Matilda form the leading feature of her character, and the chief source of her distresses. The intercourse between King Arthur and his daughter Gyneth, in The Bridal of Triermain, is neither long, nor altogether amicable; but the monarch's feelings on first beholding that beautiful 'slip of 'wilderness*,' and his manner of receiving her before the queen and court†, are too forcibly and naturally described to be omitted in this enumeration.

Of all the novels, there are at most but two or three‡ in which a fond father and affectionate daughter may not be pointed out among the principal characters, and in which the main interest of many scenes does not arise out of that paternal and filial relation. What a beautiful display of natural feeling, under every turn of circumstances that can render the situations of child and parent agonizing or delightful, runs through the history of David Deans and his two daughters! How affecting is the tale of Leicester's un-

* Measure for Measure, act iii. sc. 1.
† Bridal of Triermain, canto ii. st. 14, 15.
‡ Old Mortality, Monastery, Abbot.

happy Countess, after we have seen her forsaken father consuming away with moody sorrow in his joyless manor-house*! How exquisite are the grouping and contrast of Isaac, the kind but sordid Jew, and his heroic Rebecca, of the buckram Baron of Bradwardine and the sensitive Rose, the reserved but ardent Mannering, and the flighty coquette Julia! In the Antiquary†, and Bride of Lammermoor‡, anxiety is raised to the most painful height by the spectacle of father and daughter exposed together to imminent and frightful peril. The heroines in Rob Roy and the Black Dwarf are duteous and devoted daughters, the one of an unfortunate, the other of an unworthy parent. In the whole story of Kenilworth there is nothing that more strongly indicates a master-hand than the paternal carefulness and apprehensions of the churl Foster; and among the most striking scenes in A Legend of Montrose, is that in which Sir Duncan Campbell is attracted by an obscure yearning of the heart toward his unknown child, the supposed orphan of Darnlinvarach§.

I am much deceived if the hand of our novelist is not distinctly to be traced in the characters of those imaginary correspondents, to whom the traveller Paul inscribes his excellent Letters. 'It is three long weeks,' he says, in the opening of his first communication, 'since I left the old 'mansion-house, which, for years before, has not found me 'absent for three days; and yet no letter has assured its 'quiet inmates and neighbours whether my curiosity has 'met its punishment. Methinks I see the evening circle 'assembled, and anxiously expressing their doubts and fears

* Kenilworth, vol. i. ch. 12. † Vol. i. ch. 7.

‡ Vol. i. ch. 4.

§ Tales of my Landlord, Third Series, vol. iv. ch. 1, 2.

'on account of the adventurous traveller. The major will 'talk of the dangers of outposts and free corps, and lament 'that I could not have marched under the escort of his old 'messmates of the *** regiment. The laird will speak 'scholarly and wisely of the dangers of highway robbery 'and overturns in a country where there are neither justices 'of peace nor turnpikes. The minister, again, will set up 'his old bugbears of the inquisition and of the lady who 'sitteth upon the Seven Hills. Peter the politician will 'have his anxious thoughts on the state of the public spirit 'in France; the prevalence of jacobinical opinions,—the 'reign of mobs, and of domiciliary visits,—the horrors of 'the lantern and of the guillotine. And thou, my dear, 'sister, whose life has been one unwearied course of af-'fectionate interest in the health and happiness of a cross 'old bachelor brother, what woeful anticipations must thy 'imagination have added to this accumulation of dangers! 'Broken sleep, bad diet, hard lodging, damp sheets, have, 'in your apprehension, already laid me up a patient in the 'cabaret of some miserable French village, which neither 'affords James's Powders, nor Daffy's Elixir, nor any of 'those infallible nostrums which your charity distributes 'among our village patients, undiscouraged by the ob-'stinacy of those who occasionally die, in despite both of 'the medicine and physician. It well becomes the object 'of so much and such varied solicitude, to remove it as 'speedily as the posts of this distracted country will permit. 'I anticipate the joy in every countenance when my packet 'arrives; the pleasure with which each will seize the epistle 'addressed to himself, and the delight of old James, when, 'returned from the post-office at ***, he delivers with an 'air of triumph the long expected dispatches, and then, 'smoothing his grey hairs with one hand, and holding with

'the other the handle of the door, lingers in the parlour, 'till he, too, has the reward of his diligence, in learning 'his master's welfare.

'Till these news arrive, I cannot flatter myself that things 'will go perfectly right at the old chateau; or, rather my 'vanity suggests, that the absence of so principal a person 'among its inmates and intimates has been a chilling damp 'upon the harmless pleasures and pursuits of those who have 'remained behind. I shall be somewhat disappointed, if 'the Major has displayed alacrity in putting his double-'barrel in order for the moors; or if the Laird has shown 'his usual solicitude for a seasonable sprinkling of rain to 'refresh the turnip-field. Peter's speculations on politics, 'and his walks to the bowling-green, have been darkened, 'doubtless, and saddened by the uncertainty of my fate; 'and I even suspect the parson has spared his flock one '*Seventhly* of his text in his anxiety upon my account. 'For you, my dear Margaret, can I doubt the interest you 'have given me in your affections from the earliest period 'of recollection; when we pulled gowans together upon the 'green, until the moment when my travelling trunk, packed 'by your indefatigable exertions, stood ready to be locked, 'but ere the key could be turned, reversing the frolics of 'the enchanted chest of the Merchant Abudah, sprung once 'more open, as if in derision of your labours? To you, 'therefore, in all justice belong the first fruits of my cor-'respondence.'—*Paul's Letters*, Letter I.

In this cluster of personages the author has united all that antique simplicity, that cordial feeling, that eccentric quaintness of humour, and that well-bred and somewhat aristocratic air, which the novelist so delights to combine in his family pieces. You may trace in the sentences I have extracted some points of strong resemblance to the

'adieus of Waverley*,' on his departure from the family mansion, where he had passed his youth. The military, and stately, and tender farewell of Sir Everard; his caution against 'rakes, gamblers, and whigs;' Aunt Rachel's assiduity in fitting-out her nephew for the campaign; and the counsels of the Rev. Mr. Pembroke, 'to eschew the profane 'company of scoffers and latitudinarians, too much abound-'ing in the army,' and to resist the 'pernicious doctrines in 'church and state,' 'of presbyterians and other sectaries,' are very much in the manner of Paul's 'Kinsfolk;' and I am confident of having seen 'Old James' in the novelist's service, though I cannot distinctly recollect the occasion.

The contrasted characters of Wycliffe and Risingham form, in many particulars, an exact parallel to those of Glossin and Hatteraick; indeed, the two confederacies in guilt are carried on under circumstances so precisely similar, and give rise to scenes so nearly resembling each other, that it is almost impossible to look upon the tales of Rokeby and Guy Mannering as the work of different authors. In both cases we have a politic, hypocritical, and fearful, but wholly unprincipled villain employing the services of a ruffian, fierce, debauched, and uncompromising, yet retaining some faint sparks of generous nature; the one surrounding himself with a vast and complicated web of machinations, the other intent only on immediate gain, security, and vengeance; the one detesting and fearing his accomplice's reckless ferocity; the other impatient of his suborner's timorous cunning, and even disgusted by the utter wickedness of his intrigues. Their conferences resemble each other in so many points, that to give a perfect display of the likeness it would be necessary to transcribe them entirely. Os-

* Vol. i. ch. 5, 6.

wald, like Glossin, meets his confederate with a mind harassed by remorseful dreams*; each feels a personal apprehension from the savage violence of his agent; each veils his fear and hatred under terms of endearment—'good 'gentle friend†'—'my good friend'—'my dear Dirk'—'my friend Hatteraick'—'my bully boy‡!'—and each is irritated and tormented by an assumed apathy and unapprehensiveness in his moody companion. You will find, on comparison, that the scenes (I allude especially to that in the opening of Rokeby, and to the first two interviews between Glossin and the smuggler) agree with each other in their minute and subordinate circumstances as well as in their general tenor and conduct. For example—'You must kindle 'some fire too,' says Hatteraick, when visited by Glossin in the cave, 'for hold mich der deyvil, Ich bin ganz gefrorne!' —'The flame then began to blaze sprightly, and Hatteraick 'hung his bronzed visage, and expanded his hard and 'sinewy hands over it, with an avidity resembling that of 'famine to which food is exposed.'—'And now I have 'brought you some breakfast,' said Glossin, producing some 'cold meat and a flask of spirits. The latter Hatteraick 'eagerly seized upon, and applied to his mouth; and, after 'a hearty draught, he exclaimed, with great rapture, 'Das 'schmeckt!—That is good §.'

Bertram in the apartment of Wycliffe—

> "From gloves of mail relieved his hands,
> And spread them to the kindling brands,
> And, turning to the genial board,
> Without a health, or pledge, or word

* Rokeby, canto i. st. 2, 3. Guy Mannering, vol. ii. ch. 12, 13. † Rokeby, canto i. st. 12.

‡ Guy Mannering, vol. ii. ch. 13. § Ibid.

Of meet and social reverence said,
Deeply he drank, and fiercely fed;
As free from ceremony's sway,
As famished wolf that tears his prey.

Rokeby, Canto I. St. 6.

But the most remarkable similarity is in the views and expectations of these two ruffians with regard to a division of spoils.

"When last we reasoned of this deed,
Nought, I bethink me, was agreed,
Or by what rule, or when, or where,
The wealth of Mortham we should share;
Then list, while I the portion name,
Our differing laws give each to claim.
Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,
Her rules of heritage must own;
They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
And these I yield:—do thou revere
The statutes of the buccaneer.
* * * * *
When falls a mate in battle broil,
His comrade heirs his portioned spoil;
When dies in fight a daring foe,
He claims his wealth who struck the blow;
And either rule to me assigns
Those spoils of Indian seas and mines
Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark;
* * * * *
I go to search, where, dark and deep,
Those trans-atlantic treasures sleep.
Thou must along—for, lacking thee,
The heir will scarce find entrance free;

And then farewell. I haste to try
Each varied pleasure wealth can buy;
When cloyed each wish, these wars afford
Fresh work for Bertram's restless sword."

Rokeby, Canto I. St. 21.

'"Pshaw! pshaw!' says Glossin to Hatteraick, 'don't let 'us jest; I am not against making a handsome compliment '—but it's your affair as well as mine.'

'"What do you talk of my affair? is it not you that keep 'the younker's whole estate from him? Dirk Hatteraick 'never touched a stiver of his rents.'

'"Hush—hush—I tell you it shall be a joint business.'

'"Why will ye give me half the kitt?'—'What, half the 'estate?—d'ye mean we should set up house together at 'Ellangowan, and take the barony, ridge about?'—'Sturm-'wetter, no! but you might give me half the value—half 'the gelt. Live with you? nein—I would have a lust-haus 'of mine own on the Middleburgh Dyke, and a blumen-'garten like a burgo-master's.'

'"Ay, and a wooden lion at the door, and a painted cen-'tinel in the garden, with a pipe in his mouth!—But, hark 'ye, Hatteraick; what will all the tulips and flower gardens, 'and pleasure houses in the Netherlands do for you, if you 'are hanged here in Scotland?'

'Hatteraick's countenance fell.'—*Guy Mannering*, vol. ii. ch. 13.

I have already* extracted the forcible and picturesque description of Glossin's agonizing suspense while Hatteraick, by his connivance, escapes from the old tower. Wycliffe is placed in the same situation when his followers, headed by O'Neale, disperse themselves through the woods in pursuit of Bertram.

* Letter VI.

" Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry,
' Suspicion!—yes—pursue him—fly—
But venture not, in useless strife,
On ruffian desperate of his life.
Whoever finds him, shoot him dead!
Five hundred nobles for his head.'
* * * * *
" Leaning against the elmin tree,
With drooping head, and slackened knee,
And clenched teeth, and close-clasped hands,
In agony of soul he stands!
His downcast eye on earth is bent,
His soul to every sound is lent,
For in each shout that cleaves the air
May ring discovery and despair.
* * * * *
What 'vailed it him, that brightly played
The morning sun on Mortham's glade?
All seems in giddy round to ride,
Like objects on a stormy tide,
Seen eddying by the moonlight dim,
Imperfectly to sink and swim.
What 'vailed it, that the fair domain,
Its battled mansion, hill and plain,
On which the sun so brightly shone,
Envied so long, was now his own?
The lowest dungeon, in that hour,
Of Brackenbury's dismal tower,
Had been his choice, could such a doom
Have opened Mortham's bloody tomb!
Forced, too, to turn unwilling ear
To each surmise of hope or fear,
Murmured among the rustics round,
Who gathered at the larum sound,

He dare not turn his head away,
Even to look up to heaven to pray,
Or call on hell, in bitter mood,
For one sharp death shot from the wood!"

Rokeby, Canto II. St. 26, &c.

To close the comparison, the usurper of Ellangowan is murdered by his accomplice in a fit of fury, and Oswald falls a victim to the provoked ferocity of Risingham.

Poor Blanche of Devan, with her feathers and flowers, and fluttering mantle, her scraps of music, and her fantastic demeanour exposing her to vulgar violence and insult, is not unlike the persecuted maniac Madge Wildfire; and as the one admonishes Fitz-James by a song, of the ambush laid in his way from Loch Katrine*, so the other, by a wild but significant chaunt, acquaints George Robertson with the secret approach of his enemies to Muschat's Cairn†.

The operation of love and jealousy on the impetuous and gloomy temper of Allan M'Aulay‡ brings to mind the passion of Roderic Dhu for Ellen, and his boiling indignation at a rival's interference. There is a strong general likeness between Bois-Guilbert the Templar, and Marmion; both renowned and experienced soldiers, men of mature age, but with more than the ordinary fires of youth; impatient of rebuke or opposition; jealous of military honour, yet descending, for the accomplishment of favourite designs, to actual dishonesty. Even in personal appearance they have some points of similarity§. But if their resemblance

* Lady of the Lake, canto iv. st. 21, &c.

† Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. ii. ch. 5.

‡ Legend of Montrose.

§ Marmion, canto i. st. 5. Ivanhoe, vol. i. ch. 2, 4.

were less, there is one coincidence which unavoidably brings them together in our minds; that each is guided on his journey by a mysterious palmer*, who proves in the sequel to be an enemy and rival; and each is disturbed in his social hour by the lowering presence and raven note of this religious malcontent.

" —Soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said,
'Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung?
* * * * * *
Say, what may this portend?'
Then first the Palmer silence broke,
(The live-long day he had not spoke),
'The death of a dear friend.'"

Marmion, Canto III. St. 13.

'"Forgive me, lady,' replied De Bois-Guilbert, 'the English monarch did, indeed, bring to Palestine a host of 'gallant warriors, second only to those whose breasts have 'been the unceasing bulwark of that blessed land.'

'"Second to NONE,' said the Pilgrim, who had stood near 'enough to hear, and had listened to this conversation with 'marked impatience. All turned toward the spot from 'whence this unexpected asseveration was heard.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. i. ch. 5.

We have another melancholy mock-pilgrim in the following romantic reverie of Edward Waverley:

'Then arose in long and fair array the splendour of the 'bridal feast at Waverley Castle; the tall and emaciated 'form of its real lord, as he stood in his pilgrim's weeds, an 'unnoticed spectator of the festivities of his supposed heir

* Marmion, canto i., &c. Ivanhoe, vol. i. ch. 2, 4.

'and intended bride; the electrical shock occasioned by 'the discovery; the springing of the vassals to arms; the 'astonishment of the bridegroom; the terror and confusion 'of the bride.'—*Waverley*, vol. i. ch. 4.

The characters of Roland Græme and Henry Seyton, though not exactly similar in themselves to those of Fitz-Eustace and Henry Blount, remind us of the two English squires by the manner in which the novelist has thrown them together, particularly in their attendance on Queen Mary at Crookstone, when they look upon the distant battle, and repine at the duty which condemns them to inglorious safety. And as Blount first, and then Fitz-Eustace quits the side of Clare to plunge into the fight, so Henry Seyton flies to join his father's banner, and is followed after an interval by Græme*.

It is, I think, worthy of remark, that in the construction of their stories both the novelist and the poet occasionally use, with a boldnes somewhat uncommon, the licence of suddenly overleaping a large portion of time in the midst of the narrative. This break is in every case rendered more remarkable by the leisurely and consecutive manner in which the author tells the preceding and following parts of the story. In Marmion, the transactions of two or three weeks, from the Baron's arrival at Tantallon till he gives orders for departing, are summed up in a single stanza†. In the Lord of the Isles nearly seven years pass between the fifth and sixth cantos. In the Bridal of Triermain, a period of almost five centuries elapses between the enchantment and the deliverance of Gyneth; but as the former part of the story is introduced episodically, I do not much insist on this example.

* Marmion, canto vi. st. 25, 7. Abbot, vol. iii. ch. 10.

† Canto v. st. 34.

In Harold the Dauntless several years are disposed of in two or three stanzas at the end of the first canto. In Guy Mannering, the interval between Frank Kennedy's murder and Colonel Mannering's second arrival at Kippletringan (related in the following chapter*) is seventeen years; and Henry Morton's exile from Scotland cannot occupy less than ten†. In the Heart of Mid-Lothian five years, from the parting of Jeanie and her sister on the beach at Roseneath, to the arrival of Lady Staunton's letter, are dispatched in a single chapter‡; and shortly afterwards a period of nearly ten years is passed over with the same rapidity§. Transitions of the same kind occur in Waverley‖, Rob Roy¶, The Bride of Lammermoor**, A Legend of Montrose††, The Monastery‡‡, and The Abbot§§. I do not mention the practice with a view of pointing it out to censure, though it may, perhaps, in strictness, be considered inartificial.

A favourite exhibition of skill with both writers is to contrive a surprise for the reader by an unforeseen explanation of mysteries which have perplexed his sagacity, or by a sudden disclosure of facts which never entered into his contemplation. Few story-tellers are so successful in baffling conjecture and eluding anticipation. The secret of Fitz-James's true rank is kept with admirable address till the proper moment‖‖; Montrose, and Cœur-de-Lion¶¶,

* Guy Mannering, vol. i. ch. 11.
† Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. iv. ch. 7.
‡ Vol. iv. ch. 10.
§ Vol. iv. ch. 12, 13.
‖ Vol. iii. ch. 10, 14.
¶ Vol. iii. ch. 10.
** Vol. iii. ch. 1.
†† Last vol. ch. 7.
‡‡ Vol. iii. c. 10, 11.
§§ Vol. ii. ch. 8, 9.
‖‖ Lady of the Lake.
¶¶ Ivanhoe.

and (if he may be mentioned in such great company) our good friend Robin Hood*, discover themselves less unexpectedly perhaps, but with very striking effect. What reader is so far-sighted as not to have been startled at Roderick Dhu's announcement of himself to Fitz-James, and his resuscitation after the combat, when Allan-bane finds him in prison at Stirling†? Little less surprising are the appearance of Rob Roy in the person of Mr. Campbell, at Glasgow Tolbooth; and that of Morris, as a prisoner at the feet of Helen M'Gregor‡. That the Rector of Willingham's son, lying on a sick bed in Lincolnshire, should prove to be the unhappy George Robertson§, is an incident sufficiently unlooked for, but too repugnant to our notions of probability. Wayland Smith's detection of his old master in the adept Alasco is an event very powerfully treated‖; and there is not, I think, a more agreeable circumstance in the Abbot than the re-appearance of Father Boniface as Blinkhoolie, the gardener¶. The real Deloraine bursting into the lists at Branksome, just as another champion, under his form, has vanquished Richard Musgrave, is a highly effective incident**; but I fear the same praise cannot justly be bestowed on De Wilton's midnight meeting with Marmion in the Pictish camp††. It must indeed be owned, that both our authors now and then reckon too largely upon the *bonhomie* of their readers, and that their marvels are sometimes so unlikely in themselves, and

* Ivanhoe. † Lady of the Lake, canto v. st. 9. vi. 12.
‡ Rob Roy, vol. ii. ch. 10. iii. 4.
§ Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. iii. ch. 8.
‖ Kenilworth, vol. ii. ch. 5. ¶ Vol. iii. ch. 2.
** Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto v. st. 24.
†† Marmion. canto iv. st. 18. &c.

sometimes brought about by means so frivolous, extravagant, or laboriously planned, as to excite a determined spirit of incredulity. The adventure last alluded to, the story of Search No. I.*; and the revival of Athelstane the Unready†, are prominent instances. The preservation of our Saxon friend by Bois-Guilbert's sword turning in his hand, so that he strikes with the flat instead of the edge‡; and Mortham's escape in Rokeby§, by Risingham's shooting the horse, and imagining that he has dispatched the rider, may perhaps be kept in countenance by the passage in Fielding's Covent-garden Tragedy, where a hero, who had to all appearance been run through the body, unexpectedly walks in, and being interrogated,

> "Say by what lucky chance we see you here?"

replies,

> "In a few words I 'll satisfy your doubt;
> I through the coat was, not the body, run."

Another inquiry follows—

> "But say Stormandra, did I not behold
> Thee hanging to the curtains of thy bed?
> *Stor.* No, my dear love, it was my gown, not me."
>
> Last Scene.

The catastrophe of The Black Dwarf‖, the recognition of Mortham's lost son in the Irish orphan Redmond¶, and the

* Antiquary, vol. ii. ch. 9. iii. ch. 15.
† Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 12. ‡ Ib. ib.
§ Canto vi. st. 11. ‖ Ch. 18, 19.
¶ Rokeby, canto vi. st. 14, 15.

conversion of Harold's page into a female*, are additional specimens of unsuccessful contrivance, by which, at a great expence of probability, little pleasure is created, and no astonishment, unless it be at the unaccountable failure of invention and judgment in writers so highly gifted with both.

The novelist and poet are both distinguished by their familiarity with national superstitions, and their love of dwelling on the various modes in which human affairs are supposed to be affected by supernatural influence. Their fancy revels and luxuriates amidst omens, magic spells, predictions, mysterious warnings, presages and prophetic dreams, and prognostications by second sight; they have at their command

> "A thousand fantasies
> * * * * *
> Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
> And aery tongues†;

of goblins and fairies, witches and sorcerers, ghosts and dæmons, and sprites from water, air, and earth. Of the larger poems published by the author of Marmion there is not one; of the novels produced by the author of Waverley there are but two or three, in which some appeal, more or less forcible, is not directed to our involuntary sympathy with popular superstition. Among the minor works of the poet, his Glenfinlas and Eve of St. John‡ afford abundant proof of his terrifying powers; though the first of these ballads, it is just to observe, possesses a much higher claim

* Harold the Dauntless, canto vi. st. 11, &c.

† Comus.

‡ See Border Minstrelsy, vol. iii. part iii.

to praise in its beautiful imagery, and mournful sweetness of composition.

I do not presume to insinuate, that either the novelist or the poet is a serious believer in any of those mysterious phenomena, which they have celebrated in their writings; but it is evident that a strong and cherished predilection for the 'wild and wonderful,' and a continued study of all subjects falling under the denomination of the marvellous, have produced upon their ardent minds an effect at least analogous to that described in the following excellent passage of the Life of Dryden.

'Collins has thus celebrated Fairfax:

> "Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
> Believed the magic wonders which he sung."

'Nor can there be a doubt, that, as every work of imagination is tinged with the author's passions and prejudices, it must be deep and energetic in proportion to the character of these impressions. Those superstitious sciences and pursuits, which would by mystic rites, doctrines, and inferences connect us with the invisible world of spirits, or guide our daring researches to a knowledge of future events, are indeed usually found to cow, crush, and utterly stupify, understandings of a lower rank; but if the mind of a man of acute powers, and of warm fancy, becomes slightly imbued with the visionary feelings excited by such studies, their obscure and undefined influence is ever found to aid the sublimity of his ideas, and to give that sombre and serious effect, which he can never produce, who does not himself feel the awe which it is his object to excite. The influence of such a mystic creed is often felt where the cause is concealed; for the habits

'thus acquired are not confined to their own sphere of 'belief, but gradually extend themselves over every ad-'jacent province: and perhaps we may not go too far in 'believing, that he who has felt their impression, though 'only in one branch of faith, becomes fitted to describe, 'with an air of reality and interest, not only kindred sub-'jects, but superstitions altogether opposite to his own.'—*Life of Dryden*, sec. viii. p. 506. ed. 1808.

I must not pass without particular notice one purely fanciful subject, on which both writers are unusually fond of exercising their imaginative powers, I mean Dreams. Let me beg of you to compare the following specimens, and observe how strikingly they correspond in thought and manner.

" The hall was cleared—the Stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft an hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast:
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes;
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour 's lost.
Then,—from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.

They come in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.

* * * *

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk, and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke."

Lady of the Lake, Canto I. St. 33, 4.

'It is seldom that sleep, after such violent agitation, is 'either sound or refreshing. Lovel's was disturbed by a 'thousand baseless and confused visions. He was a bird '—he was a fish—or he flew like the one and swam like 'the other,—qualities which would have been very essential 'to his safety a few hours before. Then Miss Wardour was 'a syren, or a bird of paradise; her father a triton, or sea-'gull; and Oldbuck alternately a porpoise and a cormorant. 'These agreeable imaginations were varied by all the usual 'vagaries of a feverish dream; the air refused to bear the 'visionary, the water seemed to burn him—the rocks felt 'like down pillows as he was dashed against them—what-'ever he undertook failed in some strange and unexpected 'manner—and whatever attracted his attention underwent,

'as he attempted to investigate it, some wild and wonderful 'metamorphosis, while his mind continued all the while in 'some degree conscious of the delusion, from which it in 'vain struggled to free itself by awaking—feverish symptoms 'all, with which those who are haunted by the night 'hag, whom the learned call Ephialtes, are but too well 'acquainted. At length these crude phantasmata arranged 'themselves into something more regular.'—*Antiquary*, vol. i. ch. 10.

'Morton retired to a few hours' rest; but his imagination, 'disturbed by the events of the day, did not permit him to 'enjoy sound repose. There was a blended vision of 'horror before him, in which his new friend seemed to be a 'principal actor. The fair form of Edith Bellenden also 'mingled in his dream, weeping and with dishevelled hair, 'and appearing to call on him for comfort and assistance 'which he had it not in his power to render. He awoke 'from these unrefreshing slumbers with a feverish impulse, 'and a heart which foreboded disaster. There was already 'a tinge of dazzling lustre on the verge of the distant hills, 'and the dawn was abroad in all the freshness of a summer 'morning.'—*Tales of My Landlord*, First Series, vol. ii. ch. 6.

It sometimes happens, as most persons have observed, that a sound reaching the external sense during sleep is caught up by the fancy, and, by some strange power of adaptation, interwoven with the tissue of a dream. This circumstance has not escaped the novelist and poet.

"Again he roused him—on the lake
Look'd forth, where now the twilight flake
Of pale cold dawn began to wake.
On Coolin's cliffs the mist lay furl'd,
The morning breeze the lake had curl'd,

The short dark waves, heaved to the land,
With ceaseless plash kiss'd cliff or sand;
It was a slumb'rous sound—he turn'd
To tales at which his youth had burn'd,
Of pilgrim's path by demon cross'd,
Of sprightly elf or yelling ghost,
Of the wild witch's baneful cot,
And mermaid's alabaster grot,
Who bathes her limbs in sunless well
Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.
Thither in fancy rapt he flies,
And on his sight the vaults arise;
That hut's dark walls he sees no more,
His foot is on the marble floor,
And o'er his head the dazzling spars
Gleam like a firmament of stars!
—Hark! hears he not the sea-nymph speak
Her anger in that thrilling shriek?—
No! all too late, with Allan's dream
Mingled the captive's warning scream.
As from the ground he strives to start,
A ruffian's dagger finds his heart!
Upwards he casts his dizzy eyes, ...
Murmurs his master's name, ... and dies!

Lord of the Isles, Canto III. St. 28.

'I remember a strange agony, under which I conceived 'myself and Diana in the power of Mac-Gregor's wife, and 'about to be precipitated from a rock into the lake; the 'signal was to be the discharge of a cannon, fired by Sir 'Frederick Vernon, who, in the dress of a cardinal, of- 'ficiated at the ceremony. Nothing could be more lively 'than the impression which I received of this imaginary 'scene. I could paint, even at this moment, the mute and 'courageous submission expressed in Diana's features—

'the wild and distorted faces of the executioners, who 'crowded around as with mopping and mowing, grimaces 'ever changing, and each more hideous than that which 'preceded. I saw the rigid and inflexible fanaticism 'painted in the face of the father. I saw him lift the fatal 'match—the deadly signal exploded—it was repeated again 'and again and again, in rival thunders, by the echoes of 'the surrounding cliffs, and I awoke from fancied horror to 'real apprehension.

'The sounds in my dream were not ideal. They re-'verberated on my waking ears, but it was two or three 'minutes ere I could collect myself so as distinctly to un-'derstand that they proceeded from a violent knocking at 'the gate.'—*Rob Roy*, vol. iii. ch. 12.

The ominous dream of the Countess of Leicester is thus terminated.

'Just as he spoke, the horns again poured on her ear 'the melancholy, yet wild strain of the mort, or death note, 'and she awoke. The Countess awoke to hear a real 'bugle note, or rather the combined breath of many bugles, 'sounding not the mort, but the jolly reveillée, to remind 'the inmates of the castle of Kenilworth, that the pleasures 'of the day were to commence with a magnificent stag-'hunting in the neighbouring chase.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. iii. ch. 8.

Lovel's dream, the beginning of which I just now quoted, ends in a similar manner.

'As the vision shut his volume, a strain of delightful 'music seemed to fill the apartment—Lovel started, and 'became completely awake. The music, however, was still 'in his ears, nor ceased till he could distinctly follow the 'measure of an old Scottish tune.—With its visionary 'character it had lost much of its charms—it was now

'nothing more than an air on the harpsichord, tolerably 'well performed.'—*Antiquary*, vol. i. ch. 10.

Should you feel desirous of pursuing this subject further, I would point out as deserving your attention the dreams of Glossin, in Guy Mannering*; of the hero in Harold the Dauntless†; and of Effie Deans, in the Heart of Mid-Lothian‡.

The incident of a person supposed to be dead emerging from concealment and being mistaken for a spectre, occurs twice in the poems and twice in the novels: De Wilton§ and Mortham‖ appal their enemies by their supposed resuscitation; Henry Morton alarms his mistress in the same manner¶; and Athelstane inhospitably disturbs the guests at his own funeral feast**.

The death of Burley†† bears in many respects a strong resemblance to that of Risingham‡‡. Each falls ingloriously, oppressed by the united force of ignoble assailants, in a sudden and almost unforeseen conflict; a catastrophe not arising in either case out of the early and leading events of the story, but apparently contrived on purpose for the removal of personages who are lagging on the stage and impede the closing of the scene. The novelist seems embarrassed with his covenanter as the poet with his buccaneer; they cannot be quietly dismissed; but the authors have made them so strong and invincible, that it becomes difficult to find expedients for their destruction, and each is quelled at

* Vol. ii. ch. 12. † Canto vi. st. 9 to 11.
‡ Vol. ii. ch. 8. § Marmion, canto iv. st. 21.
‖ Rokeby, canto ii. st. 21, 2.
¶ Old Mortality, last vol. ch. 9.
** Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 12. †† Old Mortality, last chapter.
‡‡ Rokeby, canto vi. st. 32, &c.

last by a complication of means: by his own madness, by the fault of his horse, by the combined attack of his plebeian enemies. Both Risingham and Burley sacrifice their lives in accomplishing schemes of vengeance; both die, as they inflict death, with unshrinking sternness; both carry with them out of existence individuals whose absence is equally necessary with their own to the winding up of the fable; John Balfour assassinating Lord Evandale, and Bertram fatally cutting short the iniquities of Oswald in their moment of consummation.

The death of Rashleigh Osbaldistone* is a catastrophe not in all respects parallel to those just mentioned, but resembling them strongly in the character of the sufferer, and the somewhat inartificial contrivance of a new train of incidents at the latter end of the tale, expressly for his removal.

* Rob Roy, vol. iii. last chapter.

LETTER VIII.

"Day-light and champian discovers not more: this is open."
Twelfth Night, Act II. Sc. 3.

Thou art a blessed fellow, to think as every man thinks.
Henry IV. Part II. Act II. Sc. 2.

From the incidents themselves, we should now proceed to the manner in which they are embellished by description; but a great part of the observations belonging to this subject has been anticipated in the preceding pages. I have still, however, to point out a few remarkable instances of similarity, hitherto not noticed.

The battle scenes of the two writers are no less admirable for variety than for magnificence of imagery; but there are two or three prominent circumstances which occur with peculiar frequency. In most instances the conflict is described as seen by persons looking down upon it from a commanding point, and not mixed in the tumult themselves. The situation of Morton and his companions at Loudon-hill*, and of Queen Mary, Seyton, and Græme, at Crookstone†, are precisely the same with that of the lady and two squires at Flodden‡: the first shock of battle at Bannockburn is

* Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. iii. ch. 4.
† Abbot, vol. iii. ch. 10.
‡ Marmion, Canto VI. St. 25.

witnessed by Edith from the Gillies-hill*; Rebecca watches the attack on Torquilstone from a window of the castle†; and Allan-bane looks down upon the battle of Beal'-an-duine from a height overhanging the Trosachs‡. The natural and sublime comparison of hostile ranks engaging to an agitated sea, is introduced in the four passages last referred to, in Risingham's narrative of the battle of Marston-Moor§, in the description of the British line charging at Waterloo‖, and in the account of a similar movement by the French, in Paul's Letters¶. An approaching body of troops is likened to a dark cloud**. 'God and the Cause!' —'God and the King!' are the cries at Marston-Moor††. At Langside, 'God and the Queen!' resounded from the one party; 'God and the King!' thundered from the other‡‡. That fine incident in the battle of Flodden,

> —— "Fast as shaft could fly,
> Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
> The loose rein dangling from his head,
> Housing and saddle bloody red,
> Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by,"
>
> *Marmion*, Canto VI. St. 27.

is introduced again in the engagement at Loudon-hill:

'At length horses, whose caparisons shewed that they

* Lord of the Isles, Canto VI. St. 20.

† Ivanhoe, vol. ii. ch. 15. ‡ Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 15.

§ Rokeby, Canto I. St. 13.

‖ Field of Waterloo, St. 13. ¶ Letter VIII. 3d Ed. p. 162.

** As in Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 14. Monastery, vol. iii. ch. 11. Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 15.

†† Rokeby, Canto I. St. 12. ‡‡ Abbot, vol. iii. ch. 10.

'belonged to the Life-Guards, began to fly masterless out 'of the confusion. Dismounted soldiers next appeared, for- 'saking the conflict,' &c.—*Tales of My Landlord*, First Series, vol. iii. ch. 4.

It is thus a third time touched upon:

"But ere I cleared that bloody press,
Our northern horse ran masterless."
Rokeby, Canto I. St. 19.

And again in the Lord of the Isles:

"The Earl hath won the victory.
Lo! where yon steeds run masterless,
His banner towers above the press."
Canto VI. St. 18.

In the fight by Loch Katrine the armies suddenly shift their ground:

"As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again."
Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 18.

And thus in the battle of Inverlochy:

'Allan's threats had forced his own clan from the spot, 'and all around had pressed onwards towards the lake, car- 'rying before them noise, terror, and confusion, and leaving 'behind only the dead and the dying.'—*Legend of Mont- rose*, last vol. ch. 11.

The difficult subject of a tournament in which several knights engage at once, is admirably treated by the novelist in Ivanhoe, and by his rival in the Bridal of Triermain; and the leading thought in both descriptions is the sudden and tragic change from a scene of pomp, gaiety, and youthful pride, to one of misery, confusion, and death:

'The tide of battle seemed to flow now toward the 'southern, now toward the northern extremity of the lists, 'as the one or the other party prevailed. Meantime the 'clang of the blows, and the shouts of the combatants 'mixed fearfully with the sound of the trumpets, and 'drowned the groans of those who fell, and lay rolling de-'fenceless beneath the feet of the horses. The splendid 'armour of the combatants was now defaced with dust and 'blood, and gave way at every stroke of the sword and 'battle-axe. The gay plumage, shorn from the crests, 'drifted upon the breeze like snow-flakes. All that was 'beautiful and graceful in the martial array had dis-'appeared, and what was now visible was only calculated to 'awake terror or compassion.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. i. ch. 12.

"The lists with painted plumes were strown,
Upon the wind at random thrown.—
* * * * * *
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there came
Knights, who shall rise no more!
Gone was the pride the war that graced,
Gay shields were cleft, and crests defaced,
And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,
And pennons stream'd with gore.
* * * * * *

And now the trumpet's clamours seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulphing stream,
The sinking seaman's knell!"

Bridal of Triermain, Canto II. St. 24.

In the following highly poetical passages, describing the awful spectacle of a conflagration, there are points of resemblance, if possible, more striking than any I have yet noticed:

"Matilda saw—for frequent broke
From the dim casements gusts of smoke,
Yon tower, which late so clear defined
On the fair hemisphere reclined,

* * * * *

Now, swathed within the sweeping cloud,
Seem giant-spectre in his shroud;
Till, from each loop-hole flashing light,
A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
And, gathering to united glare,
Streams high into the midnight air,
A dismal beacon, far and wide
That wakened Greta's slumbering side."

Rokeby, Canto V. St. 34.

'The fire now began to rise high, and thick clouds of 'smoke rolled past the window, at which Bertram and Din- 'mont were stationed. Sometimes, as the wind pleased, the 'dim shroud of vapour hid every thing from their sight; 'sometimes a red glare illuminated both land and sea, and 'shone full on the stern and fierce figures, who, wild with 'ferocious activity, were engaged in loading the boats. The 'fire was at length triumphant, and spouted in jets of

'flame out at each window of the burning building.'—*Guy Mannering*, vol. iii. ch. 9.

'One turret was now in bright flames, which flashed out 'furiously from window and shot-hole.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. iii. ch. 1.

'Ravenswood—was about to ascend the hill towards the 'castle, the broad and full conflagration of which now flung 'forth a high column of red light, that flickered far to sea-'ward upon the dashing waves of the ocean.'—*Bride of Lammermoor*, vol. ii. ch. 11.

The 'giant spectre' shall also make his appearance, though in a shroud of a different fashion.

'—the tower itself,—tall and narrow, and built of a greyish 'stone, stood glimmering in the moonlight, like the sheeted 'spectre of some huge giant.'—*Bride of Lammermoor*, vol. i. ch. 6.

'A huge red glaring bonfire soon arose,—sending up a 'tall column of smoke and flame,—and illuminating the fero-'cious faces and wild gestures of the rioters who surrounded 'the place, as well as the pale and anxious groupes of those 'who, from windows in the vicinage, watched the progress 'of this alarming scene.'—*Heart of Mid-Lothian*, vol. i. ch. 5.

"And in the red and dusky light
His comrade's face each warrior saw,
Nor marvell'd it was pale with awe."

Lord of the Isles, Canto V. St. 14.

"The alarm is caught—the draw-bridge falls,
The warriors hurry from the walls,
But, by the conflagration's light,
Upon the lawn renew the fight.

* * * * *

And where is Bertram?—Soaring high,
The general flame ascends the sky;
In gathered group the soldiers gaze
Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
When———
Forth from the central mass of smoke
The giant form of Bertram broke!
* * * * *
Through forty foes his path he made,
And safely gained the forest glade."

Rokeby, Canto V. St. 35, 6.

'Bois-Guilbert—pushed over the draw-bridge, dispersing 'the archers who would have intercepted him. He was 'followed by his Saracens, and some five or six men at 'arms, who had mounted their horses.——The towering 'flames had now surmounted every obstruction, and rose to 'the evening skies one huge and burning beacon, seen far 'and wide through the adjacent country. Tower after 'tower crashed down, with blazing roof and rafter; and the 'combatants were driven from the court-yard. The van-'quished, of whom very few remained, scattered, and escaped 'into the neighbouring wood. The victors, assembling in 'large bands, gazed with wonder, not unmixed with fear, 'upon the flames, in which their own ranks and arms glanced 'dusky red. The maniac figure of the Saxon Ulrica was 'for a long time visible on the lofty stand she had chosen, 'tossing her arms abroad with wild exultation, as if she 'reigned empress of the conflagration which she had raised. 'At length, with a terrific crash, the whole turret gave way, 'and she perished in the flames which had consumed her 'tyrant. An awful pause of horror silenced each murmur 'of the armed spectators, who, for the space of several

'minutes, stirred not a finger, save to sign the cross. The 'voice of Locksley was then heard, 'Shout, yeomen! the 'den of tyrants is no more!'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. iii. ch. 1.

"But oft Matilda look'd behind,
As up the vale of Tees they wind,
Where far the mansion of her sires
Beaconed the dale with midnight fires.
In gloomy arch above them spread,
The clouded heaven lower'd bloody red;
Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
Appeared to roll in waves of blood.
Then, one by one, was heard to fall
The tower, the donjon-keep, the hall.
Each rushing down with thunder sound,
A space the conflagration drown'd;
Till gathering strength, again it rose,
Announced its triumph in its close,
Shook wide its light the landscape o'er,
Then sunk—and Rokeby was no more!"

Rokeby, Canto V. St. 37.

'While he thus spoke, the carriage making a sudden 'turn, showed them, through the left window, the village at 'some distance, but still widely beaconed by the fire, which, 'having reached a storehouse where spirits were deposited, 'now rose high into the air, a wavering column of brilliant 'light.'—*Guy Mannering*, vol. iii. ch. 9.

'As he spoke, Ravenswood attained the ridge of the hill 'from which Wolf's Crag was visible; the flames had en- 'tirely sunk down, and to his great surprise there was only 'a dusky reddening upon the clouds immediately over the 'castle, which seemed the reflection of the embers of the 'sunken fire.'—*Bride of Lammermoor*, vol. ii. ch. 12.

The kindling of a beacon is thus related in prose and in verse:

'He lighted the beacon accordingly, which threw up to 'the sky a long wavering train of light, startling the sea-'fowl from their nests, and reflected far beneath by the red-'dening billows of the sea. The brother warders of Caxon 'being equally diligent, caught and repeated his signal. 'The lights glanced on headlands and capes and inland 'hills, and the whole district was alarmed by the signal of 'invasion.'—*Antiquary*, vol. iii. ch. 16.

"The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
And ruddy blushed the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven;
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen,
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night."

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto III. St. 29.

Let me now refresh your mind's eye with part of a morning picture:

'The daylight had dawned upon the glades of the oak 'forest. The green boughs glittered with all their pearls of 'dew. The hind led her fawn from the covert of high fern 'to the more open walks of the green-wood.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. iii. ch. 2.

"The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch-Katrine blue;

Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees.
* * * * *
The doe awoke, and to the lawn
Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her fawn,
The grey mist left the mountain side."—&c.
Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 2.

There are several circumstances in Lovel's nocturnal adventure at St. Ruth's*, which may remind you of the justly celebrated scene at Melrose in the Lay of the Last Minstrel†. The moonlight, the humid freshness of the flowers, the old and young man sitting down together amidst the ruins, and the figure of St. Michael trampling on the dragon, are common to both descriptions. In both there is a treasure to be sought beneath a tomb-stone, which being raised, in one narrative we are told that a supernatural light broke forth, in the other it is expressly mentioned that no such light appeared: but in both instances the adventurers are disturbed by mysterious noises in the cloister-galleries.

In speaking of the moon as seen in a tempestuous sky, the novelist says that 'she waded amid the stormy and 'dusky 'clouds, which the wind from time to time drove across her 'surface,'—*Antiquary,* vol. ii. ch. 10. Thus too the poet,

"The wading moon, with storm-presaging gleam,
Now gave and now withheld her doubtful beam."
The Poacher. (*Miscellaneous Poems,* Edinburgh, 1820.) Page 361.

In a clear night,

—"the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams,"—&c.
Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto II. St. 1.

* Antiquary, vol. ii. ch. 6. † Canto II. St. 7 to 22.

'There 's a silver shower on the alders dank.'—*Monastery*, vol. i. ch. 5.

The following image in the description of a torrent—

> "Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
> Like the mane of a chesnut steed—"
> *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Canto I. St. 28.

is thus in part repeated:

'She could see the crest of the torrent flung loose down 'the rock like the mane of a wild horse.'—*Heart of Mid Lothian*, vol. iv. ch. 13.

The singular and interesting picture of a salmon-hunt, given in the second volume of Guy Mannering (chap. 5), occurs again in a reduced form, but clearly to be recognized, in a small poem (already alluded to) which is published with the Bridal of Triermain and Harold, beginning 'On 'Ettrick Forest's mountains dun.' The prose passage is too long to be extracted; the verses are these:

> "'Tis blythe along the midnight tide,
> With stalwart arm the boat to guide;
> On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
> And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
> Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
> Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
> And from the bank our band appears
> Like Genii, armed with fiery spears."
> *Miscellaneous Poems*, Edinburgh, 1820, page 154.

The following passages closely resemble each other:

''Hark! the English are setting their watch.' The roll 'of the drum and shrill accompaniment of the fifes swelled 'up the hill—died away—resumed its thunder—and was 'at length hushed. The trumpets and kettle-drums of the

'cavalry were next heard to perform the beautiful and wild 'point of war appropriated as a signal for that piece of noc- 'turnal duty, and then finally sunk upon the wind with a 'shrill and mournful cadence.'—*Waverley*, vol. iii. ch. 23.

'The music, which played a variety of English and Scot- 'tish airs, harmonised with the distant roll of the drums, 'and the notes of that beautiful point of war which is per- 'formed by our bugles at the setting of the watch.'—*Paul's Letters.* Letter XII.

Apropos of bugles—

——"faint its beauties——
And few as leaves that tremble, sear and dry,
When wild November hath his bugle wound."
Lord of the Isles, Canto I. Introduction.

"As, to the autumn breeze's bugle-sound,
Various and vague the dry leaves dance their round."
Bride of Lammermoor, vol. ii. ch. i. Motto (given as '*Anonymous*').

The groupes in the two following pictures are nearly alike, and are sketched from similar points of view:

"—With the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where mustered in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.
* * * * *
A various scene the clansmen made,
Some sate, some stood, some slowly strayed;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were couched to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye
From the deep heather where they lie."
Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 30, 1.

'We arrived at an eminence covered with brushwood, 'which gave us a commanding prospect down the valley, 'and a full view of the post which the militia occupied.—— 'The appearance of the piquetted horses, feeding in this 'little vale; the forms of the soldiers as they sate, stood, or 'walked, in various groupes in the vicinity of the river— 'formed a beautiful foreground," &c.—*Rob Roy*, vol. iii. ch. 5.

Of the next two passages, describing the inmates of a castle in active preparation for a siege, it is difficult to say which is the most animated:

'The arrangements for defence were not made without 'the degree of fracas incidental to such occasions. Women 'shrieked, cattle bellowed, dogs howled, men ran to and 'fro, cursing and swearing without intermission, the lum- 'bering of the old guns backwards and forwards shook the 'battlements, the court resounded with the hasty gallop of 'messengers who went and returned upon errands of im- 'portance, and the din of warlike preparation was mingled 'with the sound of female lamentation. Such a Babel of 'discord might have awakened the slumbers of the very 'dead, and therefore was not long ere it dispelled the ab- 'stracted reveries of Edith Bellenden.'—*Tales of My Landlord*, First Series, vol. iii. ch. 6.

"Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,
The ready horsemen sprung;

* * * * *

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal;
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watch-word from the sleepless ward,
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yelled within."

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto III. St. 28, 30.

"For pathless marsh and mountain cell
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frightened flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear."

Ibid. Canto IV. St. 3.

The comparison—

"Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettricke wood—"

Ibid. Canto V. St. 14.

is thus amplified by Captain Dalgetty:

'The whilk Swèdish feathers, although they look gay to 'the eye, resembling the shrubs or lesser trees of a forest, 'as the puissant pikes, arranged in battalia behind them, 'correspond to the tall pines thereof, yet, nevertheless, are 'not altogether so soft to encounter as the plumage of

'a goose.'—*Tales of My Landlord*, Third Series, vol. iii. ch. 2.

The knights at the tournament of Ashby,

'Mounted bravely and armed richly,' sat 'on their war-'saddles like so many pillars of iron, and awaiting the 'signal of encounter with the same ardour as their generous 'steeds.'———*Ivanhoe*, vol. i. ch. 12.

In King James's camp on the Borough-moor,

——"Men-at-arms were here,
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
Like iron towers for strength and weight,
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
With battle-axe and spear."

Marmion, Canto V. St. 2.

The Isles-men

—"Raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt."

Ibid. Canto V. St. 5.

The Captain of Knockdunder, who had probably never read these animated lines, described the babble of Celtic tongues in nearly the same manner, when asked whether the call of Reuben Butler to his ministry was a 'real harmonious call' on the part of the parishioners:

'I pelieve,' said Duncan, 'it was as harmonious as could 'pe expected, when the tae half o' the bodies were clavering 'Sassenach, and t'other skirling Gaelic, like sea-maws and

'clack-geese before a storm.'—*Heart of Mid Lothian*, vol. iv. ch. 7.

A Highland concert of imprecations:

"Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammer'd slow."
Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 10.

'—A shrilly sound of female exclamation, mixed with the 'screams of children, the hooping of boys, and the clapping 'of hands with which the Highland dames enforce their 'notes whether of rage or lamentation.'—*Rob Roy*, vol. iii. ch. 3.

The feelings of a person about to be hanged, not, I believe, an every-day subject of poetical speculation, are thus forcibly described:

Waverley 'accompanied Fergus with downcast eyes, 'tingling ears, and the sensation of a criminal, who, while 'he moves slowly through the crowds that have assembled 'to behold his execution, receives no clear sensation either 'from the noise which fills his ears, or the tumult on which 'he casts his wandering look.'—*Waverley*, vol. ii. ch. 20.

"What thoughts are his, while all in vain
His eye for aid explores the plain?
What thoughts, while, with a dizzy ear,
He hears the death-prayer mutter'd near?
And must he die such death accurst?"—
Lord of the Isles, Canto V. St. 26.

"Just then was sung his parting hymn;
And Denzil turn'd his eye-balls dim,
And scarcely conscious what he sees,
Follows the horsemen down the Tees,
And scarcely conscious what he hears,
The trumpets tingle in his ears.
O'er the long bridge they're sweeping now,
The van is hid by greenwood bough;
But ere the rearward had pass'd o'er,
Guy Denzil heard and saw no more!
One stroke upon the castle bell,
To Oswald rung his dying knell."

Rokeby, Canto VI. St. 25.

The parting of Hobbie Elliot from his grandmother is not unlike the leave-taking of young Duncraggan:

'"Urge me not, mother—not now!' He was rushing 'out, when, looking back, he observed his grandmother 'make a mute attitude of affliction. He returned hastily, 'threw himself into her arms, and said, 'Yes, mother, I *can* 'say, His will be done, since it will comfort you.'

'"May He go forth—may He go forth with you, my dear 'bairn.'"—*Black Dwarf*, ch. 7.

"In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broad-sword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu—
'Alas!' she sobbed,—'and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth like Duncan's son!'"

Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 18.

The description of Sir Halbert Glendinning, in the Ab-

bot, corresponds remarkably in some of its circumstances with the well-known portraiture of Marmion:

'There were deep traces of care on those noble features, 'over which each emotion used formerly to pass, like light 'clouds across a summer sky. That sky was now, not 'perhaps clouded, but still and grave like that of a sober 'autumn evening. The forehead was higher and more 'bare than in early youth, and the locks which still clus- 'tered thick and dark on the warrior's head, were worn 'away at the temples, not by age, but by the constant 'pressure of the steel cap or helmet. His beard, according 'to the fashion of the times, grew short and thick, and was 'turned into mustachios on the upper lip, and peaked at the 'extremity. The cheek, weather-beaten and embrowned, 'had lost the glow of youth, but shewed the vigorous com- 'plexion of active and confirmed manhood. Halbert Glen- 'dinning was, in a word, a knight to ride at a king's right 'hand, to bear his banner in war, and to be his counsellor 'in time of peace; for his looks expressed the considerate 'firmness which can resolve wisely and dare boldly.'— *Abbot*, vol. i. ch. 3.

"His eye-brow dark, and eye of fire,
Shew'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak;
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick moustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age;
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,
Shewed him no carpet-knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage."

Marmion, Canto I. St. 5.

The turn of thought in the next two passages is precisely the same:

'When they came upon the ground, there sat upon the 'roots of the old thorn, a figure, as vigorous in his decay as 'the moss-grown but strong and contorted boughs which 'served him for a canopy. It was old Ochiltree.'—*Antiquary*, vol. ii. ch. 5.

"The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he."
Lady of the Lake, Canto II. St. 4.

One more parallel, and I will dismiss the article of descriptions:

''Tre,' my reverend sir,' said Sir Halbert; 'and there-'fore I entreat my brother and you to pledge me in a cup 'of this orthodox vintage.'

'The thin old porter looked with a wishful glance towards 'the Abbot. 'Do, Veniam,' said the Superior; and the 'old man seized, with a trembling hand, a beverage to which 'he had been long unaccustomed, drained the cup with pro-'tracted delight, as if dwelling on the flavour and perfume, 'and set it down with a melancholy smile and shake of the 'head, as if bidding adieu in future to such delicious 'potations. The brothers smiled.'—*Abbot*, vol. i. ch. 15.

This picture, though unequal in merit, bears a strong, and, I think, unstudied resemblance to that incomparably spirited and elegant one in the Lay of the Last Minstrel,

"While thus he pour'd the lengthened tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail:

Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the withered hand of age
A goblet crowned with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop filled his eye,
Prayed God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheered a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd;
And he, emboldened by the draught,
Looked gaily back to them and laughed.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swelled his old veins, and cheered his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began:—
'And said I that my limbs were old?'—&c."
Lay of the Last Minstrel, End of Canto II.

There still remain a few similarities of thought which appear to me worthy your notice, but are so miscellaneous in their nature, that I will not attempt to classify, but cite them indiscriminately as they occur:

"I claimed of him my only child—
As he disowned the theft, he smiled!
That very calm and callous look,
That fiendish sneer his visage took,
As when he said, in scornful mood,
'There is a gallant in the wood!'"
Rokeby, Canto IV. St. 24.

'And then they stretch out their faces, and make mouths, and girn at me, and whichever way I look, I see a face

'laughing like Meg Murdockson, when she tauld me I had 'seen the last of my wean. God preserve us, Jeanie, that 'carline has a fearsome face.'—*Heart of Mid Lothian*, vol. ii. ch. 8.

This fiendish smile seems to be strongly fixed in the imagination of both writers as the physiognomical expression of confirmed and cold-blooded villainy. You no doubt remember the sarcastic sneer of Varney, so often mentioned in Kenilworth, which writhed his cheek even in death*: and the same characteristic habit is given to Guy Denzil in the lines of Rokeby just quoted, as well as in other parts of that poem†.

Both writers usually represent their heroes as brave, yet not wholly insensible to fear; and there is a great similarity in their manner of recording the temporary weakness of a mind habitually courageous when surprised at extraordinary disadvantage. Such is the situation of Brown, concealed by Meg Merrilies on the approach of the smugglers, and without means of defence or retreat:

'Brown was a soldier, and a brave one, but he was also 'a man, and at this moment his fears mastered his courage 'so completely, that the cold drops burst out from every 'pore.' At 'the idea of being dragged out of his miserable 'concealment by wretches whose trade was that of midnight 'murder, without weapons or the slightest means of de-'fence,——the bitterness of his emotions almost choked 'him.'—*Guy Mannering*, vol. ii. ch. 6.

"Still spoke the Monk, when the bell tolled one!
I tell you that a braver man

* Kenilworth, vol. iii. last chapter.
† As, Canto III. St. 19.—VI. 12.

Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurred a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head."

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto II. St. 16.

"I 've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight, and mix'd affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight;
But when this unexpected foe
Seem'd starting from the gulph below,—
I care not though the truth I show,—
I trembled with affright."

Marmion, Canto IV. St. 20.

When the guard which was leading Francis Osbaldistone prisoner fell into the Highland ambuscade:

'I clambered,' says the narrator, 'until out of breath; 'for a continued spattering fire, in which every shot was 'multiplied by a thousand echoes, the hissing of the kindled 'fuses of the grenades, and the successive explosion of those 'missiles, mingled with the huzzas of the soldiers, and the 'yells and cries of their Highland antagonists, formed a 'contrast which added—I do not shame to own it—wings 'to my desire to reach a place of safety.'—*Rob Roy*, vol. iii. ch. 3.

"What thought was Roland's first when fell,
In that deep wilderness, the knell
Upon his startled ear?
To slander warrior were I loth,
Yet must I hold my minstrel troth,—
It was a thought of fear."

Bridal of Triermain, Canto III. St. 6.

Many more instances might be selected; among these I would point out in particular the description of Fitz-James following Roderick Dhu, after having witnessed the sudden apparition of the concealed clansmen; the detail of Morton's sensations when about to be put to death by the covenanters; and of Lovel's, on the eve of his duel with Hector*.

The preternatural acuteness of the senses in moments of strong mental excitement, is a circumstance often touched upon in these works.

> " Far townward sounds a distant tread,
> And Oswald, starting from his bed,
> Hath caught it, though no human ear,
> Unsharpened by revenge and fear,
> Could e'er distinguish horse's clank,
> Until it reach'd the castle bank.
>
> *Rokeby*, canto i. st. 5.

In a note upon this passage, the poet says that he has 'had 'occasion to remark, in real life, the effect of keen and fer-'vent anxiety, in giving acuteness to the organs of sense.'

'It is the galloping of horse,' said Morton to himself, his sense of hearing rendered acute by the dreadful situation in which he stood; 'God grant they may come as my de-'liverers!' *Tales of My Landlord*, 1st Series, vol. iv. ch. 4.

''Hark! I hear the trampling of horse; he comes! he 'comes!' she exclaimed, jumping up in ecstacy.

''I cannot think it is he,' said Varney; 'or that you can 'hear the tread of his horse through the closely-mantled 'casements.'

* Lady of the Lake, canto v. st. 11; Tales of my Landlord, 1st series, vol. iv. ch. 4; Antiquary, vol. ii. ch. 5.

'' Stop me not, Varney; my ears are keener than thine—' it is he!'—*Kenilworth*, vol. i. ch. 6.

We find the same thought in the ballad of the Maid of Neidpath*,

> " Before the watch-dog pricked his ear,
> She heard her lover's riding."

The following thought, derived, I believe, from Miss Baillie's Count Basil, is found in Rokeby, and in the Abbot:

> " She comes not; he will wait the hour
> When her lamp lightens in the tower;
> 'Tis something yet, if as she past,
> Her shade is o'er the lattice cast."
>
> *Rokeby*, Canto i. St. 29.

' A twinkling light still streamed from the casement of ' Catherine Seyton's apartment, obscured at times for a mo- ' ment, as the shadow of the fair inhabitant passed betwixt ' the taper and the window. At length the light was re- ' moved or extinguished, and that object of speculation was ' also withdrawn from the eyes of the meditative lover.'— *Abbot*, vol. iii. ch. 3.

Bois-Guilbert, listening unseen to the hymn of Rebecca (Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 9), forms a picture very similar, except in costume, to Sir Roderick, overhearing the sacred chaunt of Ellen Douglas, (Lady of the Lake, Canto iii. St. 28, &c.)

* Published with The Vision of Don Roderick.; Edinburgh, 1811.

Of the next two passages, the second is little more than a prose version of the first:

" The air was sad; but sadder still
  It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plain'd as if disgrace and ill,
  And shameful death, were near.
He drew his mantle past his face,
  Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space,
  Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wish'd to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

Marmion, Canto iii. St. 12.

'Leicester resumed his place, envied and admired, beside 'the person of his Sovereign. But, could the bosom of him 'whom they universally envied, have been laid open before 'the inhabitants of the crowded hall, with all its dark 'thoughts—which of them, from the most ambitious noble 'in the courtly circle, down to the most wretched menial, who 'lived by shifting of trenchers, would have desired to change 'characters with the favourite of Elizabeth, and the Lord 'of Kenilworth!'—*Kenilworth*, vol. iii. ch. 13.

Of that malevolent ignorance which, not content with being insensible, is also hostile to the majesty or beauty of antique monuments, both writers express the same virtuous abomination; and in nearly the same manner:

" Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,
  Rose on a turret octagon;

(But now is razed that monument,
Whence royal edict rang,
And voice of Scotland's law was sent
In glorious trumpet-clang.
O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
Upon its dull destroyer's head!
A minstrel's malison is said.")

Marmion, Canto v. St. 25; and see the Note on this Stanza.

'A sulky churlish boor has destroyed the ancient statue, 'or rather bas-relief, popularly called Robin of Redesdale. 'It seems Robin's fame attracted more visitants than was 'consistent with the growth of the heather, upon a moor 'worth a shilling an acre. Reverend as you write yourself, 'be revengeful for once, and pray with me, that he may be 'visited with such a fit of the stone, as if he had all the 'fragments of poor Robin in that region of his viscera 'where the disease holds its seat. Tell this not in Gath, 'lest the Scots rejoice that they have at length found a 'parallel instance among their neighbours, to that barbarous 'deed which demolished Arthur's oven.'—*Ivanhoe*, Dedicatory Epistle.

Robin's effigy is also alluded to in Rokeby, Canto I. St. 20, and fully described in a note referring to the passage.

The tomb of Marmion at Lichfield was—

"Levell'd, when fanatic Brook
The fair cathedral storm'd and took;—
But, thanks to Heaven, and good St. Chad,
A guerdon meet the spoiler had!"

Marmion, Canto vi. St. 36.

being, as the royalists observed, killed by a shot from St. Chad's cathedral, on St. Chad's day, and receiving his death-

wound in the very eye with which he had hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in England*.

The novelist's statement, in the dedicatory epistle just quoted, of his reasons for constructing a tale on other than Scottish subjects, may recall to your mind a somewhat similar explanation prefixed by the author of Marmion to his vision of Don Roderick. The two introductions are, I think, very similar in their general conception, although they do not strikingly resemble each other in any passage short enough to be extracted.

Both the novelist and the poet, when speaking in their own persons, give nearly the same account of their motives for writing.

"Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp,
May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own."

Lady of the Lake, Conclusion.

'The truth is, I have studied and lived for the purpose of 'gratifying my own curiosity, and passing away my own 'time; and though the result has been, that, in one shape 'or other, I have been frequently before the public, per-'haps more frequently than prudence warranted, yet I can-'not claim from them the favour due to those who have de-

* See Marmion, canto vi. note 18.

'dicated their ease and leisure to the improvement and en-
'tertainment of others."—*Monastery*, Introduction.

The practice too much indulged in by both writers, of hurrying the narrative when approaching its conclusion, is thus figuratively excused by each:—

'Ere entering upon a subject of proverbial delay, I must 'remind my reader of a progress of a stone, rolled down 'hill by an idle truant boy (a pastime at which I was my-'self expert in my more juvenile years:) it moveth at first 'slowly, avoiding by inflection every obstacle of the least 'importance; but when it has attained its full impulse, and 'draws near to the conclusion of its career, it smokes and 'thunders down, taking a rood at every spring, clearing 'hedge and ditch like a Yorkshire huntsman, and be-'coming most furiously rapid in its course, when it is 'nearest to being consigned to rest for ever. Even such is 'the course of a narrative, like that which you are per-'using.'—*Waverley*, vol. iii. ch. 22.

"'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
Hurrying, as best I can, along,
The hearers and the hasty song;
Like traveller when approaching home,
Who sees the shades of evening come,
And must not now his course delay,
Or choose the fair, but winding way;
Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
Where o'er his head the wildings bend,
To bless the breeze that cools his brow,
Or snatch a blossom from the bough."

Rokeby, Canto vi. St. 26.

Some critics, I believe, on reading The Vision of Don Roderick, have expressed dissatisfaction at the author's

summary manner of dismissing both scenery and actors at the close of that poem, as Master Peter would have put away King Marsilius and his castle, had the Fates and Don Quixote permitted.

"Then, though the Vault of Destiny be gone,
King, Prelate, all the Phantasms of my brain,
Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun,
Yet grant," &c.

Vision of Don Roderick, Stanza 63.

'Mimi ergo est jam exitus, non fabulæ; in quo cùm clau-
'sula non invenitur, fugit aliquis è manibus, deinde scabella
'concrepant, aulæum tollitur.'—*Cicero*, Orat. pro M. Cælio.

A less dignified, but an older acquaintance, is used in the same manner by the novelist.

'Reader! The Tales of my Landlord are now finally
'closed, and it was my purpose to have addressed thee in
'the vein of Jedediah Cleishbotham; but, like Horam, the
'Son of Asmar, and all other imaginary story-tellers, Jede-
'diah has melted into thin air.'

'Mr. Cleishbotham bore the same resemblance to Ariel,
'as he at whose voice he rose doth to the sage Prospero;
'and yet, so fond are we of the fictions of our own fancy,
'that I part with him, and all his imaginary localities, with
'idle reluctance.'—*Tales of my Landlord*, 3d Series. Con-
'clusion.

And he openly reminds Captain Clutterbuck of his power to annihilate him also:

'I scorn to use either arguments or threats; but you
'cannot but be aware, that, as you owe your literary existence
'to me on the one hand, so, on the other, your very all is at
'my disposal. I can at pleasure cut off your annuity, strike

'your name from the half-pay establishment, may actually 'put you to death, without being answerable to any one.'—*Monastery*, Introductory Epistle.

The transition and contrast, in these two descriptions, evidently mark them, in my opinion, for the work of the same artist:

"The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove,
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.
* * * *
No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast,
With sheathed broad-sword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.

Lady of the Lake, Canto iii. St. 2, 3.

'The fountains threw their jets into the air, as if they 'sought that their waters should be silvered by the moon-'beams—The bird of summer night had built many a nest 'in the bowers of the adjacent garden, and the tenants now 'indemnified themselves for silence during the day, by a full 'chorus of their own unrivalled warblings, now joyous, now 'pathetic, now united, now responsive to each other, as if to 'express their delight in the placid and delicious scene, to 'which they poured their melody.——Musing on matters 'far different from the fall of waters, the gleam of moonlight, 'or the song of the nightingale, the stately Leicester walked 'slowly from one end of the terrace to the other, his cloak 'wrapped around him, and his sword under his arm, with-

'out seeing any thing resembling the human form.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. iii. ch. 13.

The following lines form part of a noble passage on the English army protecting Lisbon against the French.

"For full in view the promised conquest stood,
And Lisbon's matrons, from their walls, might sum
The myriads that had half the world subdued,
And hear the distant thunders of the drum,
That bids the bands of France to storm and havoc come.

* * * * *

Four moons have heard these thunders idly roll'd,
Have seen these wistful myriads eye their prey
As famish'd wolves survey a guarded fold—
But in the middle path a lion lay!

Vision of Don Roderick, Conclusion. St. 4, 5.

This scriptural metaphor appears to be a favourite.

'"We are not yet at Dumbarton, and there is a lion in the 'path.'—'Mean you Murray, Morton, and the other rebels 'at Glasgow?'—'Tush! they dare not look on the royal 'banner.'"—*Abbot*, vol. iii. ch. 10.

'Dalgetty gave Allan to understand, that if he called 'himself a tiger, he was likely at present, to find a lion in 'his path.'—*Tales of my Landlord*, 3d series, vol. iv. c. 11.

'"There is a lion in the path—The curate of Brother-'stane and ten soldiers hae beset the pass.'—*Tales of My Landlord*, 1st Series, vol. ii. ch. 5.

'Swift expressed 'peevishness on the delay which occurred 'in making some honourable provision for his future life. 'But there was a lion in the path—The real obstacle was 'the prejudice entertained by Queen Anne,' &c.—*Life of Swift*, sect. iii. p. 163.

'The gourd of the prophet,' says the author of Paul's

Letters, 'which came up in a night and perished in a 'night, has proved the type of authority so absolute, and 'of fame so diffused.' Letter XII. 'The Prophet's gourd 'did not wither more suddenly.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. iii. ch. 11. The fondness for scriptural allusions evinced by both writers in a multitude of instances, and arising evidently from an intimate acquaintance with the Sacred Volume, is among their strongest peculiarities; and I refer now rather to the language employed by them when speaking in their own persons, than to that by which they distinguish imaginary characters.

'What becomes of those victims,' asks Miss Vernon, 'who are condemned to a convent by the will of others—'if they are born to enjoy life, and feel its blessings?'—''They are like imprisoned singing birds, condemned to 'wear out their lives in confinement, which they try to be-'guile by the exercise of accomplishments, which would 'have adorned society, had they been left at large.'

''I shall be,' returned Miss Vernon—'that is,' said she, correcting herself—'I would be rather like the wild hawk, 'who, barred the free exercise of his soar through heaven, 'will dash himself to pieces against the bars of his cage.''—*Rob Roy*, vol. i. ch. 5.

Thus, in the Lady of the Lake,

"The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage."

Canto vi. st. 22.

The imagery and turn of thought in these two sentences are strikingly similar:

——————"Prince, beware!
From the chafed tiger rend the prey,

Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare!'

Bridal of Triermain, Canto i. st. 19.

Arouse the tiger of Hyrcanian deserts,
Strive with the half-starved lion for his prey;
Lesser the risk, than rouse the slumbering fire
Of wild Fanaticism.—*Anonymous.*

Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 5. Motto.

The following mode of introducing words supposed to proceed from a supernatural personage, is used by both writers—

'So! com'st thou ere the spell is spoke?
I own thy presence, Zernebock."
'Daughter of dust,' the Deep Voice said," &c.

Harold the Dauntless, Canto ii. st. 17, 18.

"The Deep Voice said, 'O wild of will,'" &c.

Ibid. Canto v. st. 8.

"'Why sit'st thou by that ruin'd hall,
Thou aged carle, so stern and grey?
* * * *
'Know'st thou not me?' the Deep Voice cried."

Antiquary, vol. i. c. 10.

Christie of the Clint-hill, never rode a foray, without duly saying his pater-noster, as William of Deloraine used to repeat an Ave Mary on similar occasions*.

It may be worthy of notice, that in Harold the Dauntless†,

* Monastery, vol. iii. ch. 7; Lay of the last Minstrel, canto ii. st. 6.

† Canto i. st. 21.

there is a wise and good Canon Eustace, as in The Monastery, and a Prior of Jorvaux, who is robbed*, as in Ivanhoe.

Colonel Mannering's eyes, in moments of indignation, flashed a dark light. Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye, when Fitz-James proposed his submitting to the royal mercy†.

There is in the novels and poems, a peculiar coinage of noms-de-guerre, apparently issuing from one and the same fancy; as, for instance, Dickon Draw-the-sword, Arthur Fire-the-braes‡, Tony Fire-the-Faggot, Lawrence Lock-the-door§, Diccon Bend-the-bow‖, and Michael Wing-the-Wind¶.

'The Flemish women,' observes the traveller Paul, 'are 'not, I think, so handsome as my fair countrywomen, or my 'walks and visits were unfortunate in the specimens they pre-'sented of female beauty. But then, you have the old dress, 'with the screen, or mantle, hanging over the head, and falling 'down upon each shoulder, which was formerly peculiar to 'Scotland. The colour of this mantle is indeed different; 'in Scotland it was usually tartan; and in Flanders, it is 'uniformly black.'—*Paul's Letters*, Letter I.

The same similarity of costume is more than once noticed in the novels.

'Her hands trembled—as she adjusted the scarlet tartan 'screen or muffler made of plaid, which the Scottish women

* Harold the Dauntless, canto i. st. 16; Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 3.

† Guy Mannering, vol. i. ch. 13; Lady of the Lake, canto v. st. 14.

‡ Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto vi. st. 7, 8.

§ Kenilworth, vol. i. ch. 2, iii. ch. 4.

‖ Ivanhoe, vol. iii. ch. 3.

¶ Abbot, vol. ii. ch. 3.

wore, much in the fashion of the black silk veils, still a part of female dress in the Netherlands.'—*Heart of Mid Lothian*, vol. ii. ch. 2.

'In one of the female forms which tripped along the 'street, muffled in a veil of striped silk, like the women of 'Brussels at this day, his eye had discerned something which 'closely resembled the exquisite shape and spirited bearing 'of Catherine Seyton.'—*Abbot*, vol. ii. ch. 2.

A thought in the following lines from the Lady of the Lake, is repeated with some slight variation in a far more beautiful passage—

"For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower, that loves the lea,
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose,
That in the king's own garden grows;
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a-bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."

Lady of the Lake, Canto ii. St. 9.

'What signifies,' said she, 'that I have rank and honour 'in reality, if I am to live an obscure prisoner, without 'either society or observance, and suffering in my character, 'as one of dubious or disgraced reputation? I care not for 'all those strings of pearl, which you fret me by warping 'into my tresses, Janet. I tell you, that at Lidcote Hall, 'if I put but a fresh rose-bud among my hair, my good 'father would call me to him, that he might see it more 'closely, and the kind old curate would smile, and Master 'Mumblazen would say something about roses gules; and

'now I sit here, decked out like an image, with gold and 'gems, and no one to see my finery but you, Janet. There 'was the poor Tressilian too—but it avails not speaking of 'him.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. ii. ch. 10.

The two lines—

"O for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne—"

Marmion, Canto vi. St. 33.

are copied almost word for word in the verses of Francis Osbaldistone, so unmercifully criticised by his father.

"O for the voice of that wild horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne—"

Rob Roy, vol. i. ch. 2.

A refined speculator might perhaps conceive that so glaring a repetition as this could not be the effect of inadvertence, but that the novelist, induced by some transient whim or caprice, had intentionally appropriated the verses of his great contemporary. I cannot, however, imagine any motive for such a proceeding, more especially as it must appear somewhat unhandsome to take possession of another man's lines, for the mere purpose of exhibiting them in a ridiculous light. Nor does it seem to me at all unlikely that the author of Marmion, supposing him to be also the author of Rob Roy, should have unconsciously repeated himself in this instance, for we find him more than once apologising in his avowed works, for having, in the haste of composition, snatched up expressions, and even whole lines of other writers*.

* See Marmion, note 2 to canto v. Same work, conclusion of the notes. Lady of the Lake, conclusion of the notes.

Among the various noble families whose achievements have furnished themes to the novelist and poet, there is none, I think, so distinguished by both, as the house of Grahame. The chief glories of that renowned race are briefly summed up in notes on the Vision of Don Roderick, and Lady of the Lake*, of which last poem you will recollect that a Græme is one of the principal personages. Montrose's exploits are made the ground-work of a tale by the author of Waverley. And if ever that author has treated a subject *con amoré*, it is the character and actions of the gallant Claverhouse and glorious Dundee. Without suppressing or unduly palliating the circumstances which blacken his reputation, the novelist, like the poet, always sets them in the fairest light that candour will admit, and both turn eagerly to the rich display of his brighter and nobler qualities, and to the splendour of his closing-scene†. As we read of him in the spirit-stirring romance of Old Mortality, his courage, energetic spirit, and commanding talent, his soldierly courtesy of demeanor, his studied self-possession, once or twice interrupted by a flash of strong natural feeling, his zealous, though arbitrary generosity, his chivalrous devotedness to his king and his profession, form a picture which it is impossible to look upon, or having looked upon,

* Vision, &c. Conclusion, note 7; Lady of the Lake, canto ii. note 2.

† See the last-mentioned notes; Introduction to the Battle of Loudon-hill, Border Minstrelsy, vol. ii.; Introduction, and last note to the Battle of Bothwell-bridge, ibid.; Tales of My Landlord, 1st series, vol. ii. ch. 12; note on the Memoirs of Captain Creichton, Swift's works, in 19 vols.; Edinburgh, 1814. vol. x. p. 166. Introduction to the Translation of Pitcairn's Epitaph, Dryden's works, in 18 vols.; London, 1808. vol. xi. p. 113.

to remember, without a thrill of enthusiasm. The Minstrel sings of his fall with a spirit worthy the heroic subject.

"Low as that tide has ebbed with me,
It still reflects to memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket played
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was I not beside him laid?
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme."

Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto iv. St. 2.

But it is a strain still more impassioned and inspiring, that joins the well-earned fame of the descendant with the ancient glory of the sires:

"Nor be his praise o'erpast, who strove to hide
Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,
Whose wish Heaven for his country's weal denied—
Danger and fate he sought, but glory found.
From clime to clime, where'er war's trumpets sound,
The wanderer went; yet, Caledonia! still
Thine was his thought in march and tented ground;
He dreamed mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,
And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyndoch's lovely rill.

O hero of a race renowned of old,
Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle swell,
Since first distinguish'd in the onset bold,
Wild sounding when the Roman rampart fell!
By Wallace' side it rung the Southron's knell,

"Alderney, Kilsythe, and Tibber owned its fame,
Tummell's rude pass can of its terrors tell;
But ne'er from prouder field arose the name,
Than when wild Ronda learned the conquering shout of Græme!"

Vision of Don Roderick, Conclusion. Stanzas 16, 17.

The story of Angus's gigantic sword, with which he cut asunder the thigh-bone of Kilspindie, and which Morton gave Lindesay, when he challenged Bothwell to single combat, is told in a note on Marmion*, as well as in the Abbot †; and also in the Introduction to the Border Minstrelsy, where the historical authority is referred to. The old Highlander's contempt of a snow pillow, as an effeminate luxury, is reported from tradition, in a note on the Lady of the Lake, and alluded to in A Legend of Montrose ‡. Colonel Palmer's story of Callum Beg §, is closely copied from a passage in the Letters from Scotland, which is extracted, with many others from the same work, in the notes on the Lady of the Lake ‖. These letters are also commended in the preface to Waverley ¶. The descriptions of Highland hunting, by Pitscottie, and Taylor the water-poet, are cited together, both in Waverley **, and in a note on Marmion ††. In the same passage of Waverley, an incident is adopted from Mr. Gunn's essay on the Caledonian Harp, a work mentioned as curious in a note on the Lady of the Lake ‡‡. The forest learning displayed, in the Bride of Lammermoor §§, about raven-bones, and the breaking of the

* Canto vi. note 10. † Vol. ii. ch. 6.
‡ Canto ii. note 16. Tales of my Landlord, 3d series, vol. iv. ch. 9.
§ Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 9. ‖ See notes 1 and 17 on canto ii.
¶ Third Edition. ** Vol. ii. ch. 1. †† Canto ii. note 1.
‡‡ Canto i. note 10. §§ Vol. i. ch. 8.

deer, and 'hurts with horn of hart,' appears to be collected from sources also indicated in a note to the same poem*. Simmie and his brother, of whom a description is given from the Bannatyne MS. in a note on Marmion†, are again spoken of in the Monastery‡. John Lillie, and his Euphues, to which we are indebted for the fantastic humours of Sir Piercie Shafton§, were long ago introduced to our acquaintance in the Life of Dryden‖. The idea of a spirit guarding treasures which a sorcerer is to wrest from him by spells, is poetically amplified by the author of Marmion, who says he derived it from the journal of a foreign tour by one of his friends¶. The same fiction is put into the mouth of Herman Dousterswivel, in the Antiquary**. Two ballads in the Border Minstrelsy††, called 'The Battle of Loudon Hill and The Battle of Bothwell Bridge,' with their accompanying historical notices, exhibit a large part of the outline so splendidly filled up in Old Mortality. Beside the more general narrative, they contain the popular prejudices and superstitions respecting Claverhouse, which the novelist has recorded, many of the incidents related by him of the skirmish at Drumclog; the death of Cornet Grahame, and his uncle's fatal remembrance of it on the day of Bothwell Bridge; and the story of Marion Weir, from which that of Bessie Maclure is evidently copied, though with a master's hand. Take for example the following circumstance:—

'The said Marion Weir, sitting upon her husband's

* Canto iv. note 4. † Canto i. note 18.
‡ Vol. ii. ch. 10. § Monastery, vol. ii. ch. 2.
‖ Sect. i. page 7. ¶ Introductory Epistle to canto vi.
** Antiquary, vol. ii. ch. 6. †† Vol. ii.

'grave, told me, that before that, she could see no blood 'but she was in danger to faint; and yet she was helped to 'be a witness to all this, without either fainting or con- 'fusion, except when the shots were let off her eyes dazzled.' —Note on *The Battle of Bothwell Bridge*, *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. ii *.

—' 'That murdered your two sons?'

' 'Ay, sir,' replies the poor blind woman to Henry 'Morton, 'though may be ye'll gi'e their deaths another 'name.—The tane fell wi' sword in hand, fighting for a 'broken national covenant; the tother—O, they took him 'and shot him dead on the green before his mother's face! '—My auld e'en dazzled when the shots were looten off, 'and, to my thought, they waxed weaker and weaker ever 'since that weary day—and sorrow, and heart-break, and 'tears, might help on the disorder. But, alas! betraying 'Lord Evandale's young blood to his enemies' sword wad 'ne'er hae brought my Ninian and Johnie alive again.''— *Old Mortality*, last vol. ch. 13.

It is remarkable, that in his introduction to the ballad of Loudon Hill, the editor observes, speaking of the Covenanters—'Their indecent modes of prayer, their extra- 'vagant expectations of miraculous assistance, and their 'supposed inspirations, might easily furnish out a tale, at 'which the good would sigh, and the gay would laugh.'

Several leading incidents of Old Mortality may be found in the Memoirs of Captain Creichton, just now cited. In a note on this piece, the editor gives a detailed account

* The passage of which this last sentence forms a part, and which has supplied the author of Old Mortality with several other hints, is extracted from the life of Mr. Alexander Peden, the covenanting minister.

of the skirmish at Drumclog, 'from a Cameronian pub-'lication of the period*.' In another note he introduces the venerable enthusiast from whom the tale of Old Mortality is named; and quotes an epitaph preserved by his industry in the church-yard of Lesmahagow†, very similar in taste and spirit to the monumental inscription over John Balfour, transcribed by Jedediah Cleishbotham. Francis Stuart, a private in the horse-guards, is spoken of in the Memoirs as the Earl of Bothwell's grandson; but the editor supposes him to have been a degree further removed, as he is stated to be in the novel‡.

But to explore all the sources of information which the novelist and poet have used in common; to trace out their footsteps in every spot which, from time to time, they have selected as vantage ground for their invention, would be a wearisome and interminable task. Nor shall I detain you long by pressing the inferences to be drawn from their frequent recurrence to the same authors for the purpose of quotation, though a few words on this subject will perhaps not appear superfluous.

Both writers occasionally borrow a phrase, verse, or sentence from the Latin classics. 'The old Patavinian§,' Titus Livius, in particular, is much talked of in Waverley, and is bantered on his prodigies by the author of Marmion||. Among the French historical writers, Froissart and Brantome are particularly distinguished. Of British

* Swift, ut supra, vol. x. p. 128.

† Ibid. p. 160, 1. Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. iv. ch. 15.

‡ Swift, ut supra, vol. x. p. 124. Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. ii. ch. 9.

§ Waverley, vol. i. ch. 6.

|| Introductory Epistle to canto vi.

authors, the principal favourites are the elder dramatists, particularly Shakspeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, and these in their comic rather than their tragic productions; the writers of comedy from the Restoration to the early part of the last century; the old Scottish poets*; Spenser; and above all 'the great John Dryden†,' who, I believe, of all writers, is the most-frequently quoted and mentioned in terms of admiration by the novelist and poet throughout their works. Swift, on the other hand, is less frequently referred to than might be expected. Pope's Iliad and Odyssey are often resorted to for extracts. Somerville is several times complimented in the same manner. Home's Douglas is frequently quoted. The Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and other Eastern tales that have been naturalized in our country, (and to these I may add the English Oriental tale of Vathek‡,) supply both writers with some fanciful allusions. It is not, I think, unreasonable to suppose that the detail in Waverley of the hero's favourite studies, may afford a view (of course very partial and imperfect) of the novelist's own§.

The frequent and complimentary notice of contemporary poets has been already pointed out as a characteristic habit of the author of Waverley, and the author of Marmion has nearly the same favourites. He mentions Campbell with

* The same two lines,

"O Douglas! Douglas!
Tender and true,"

are introduced from the old poem of The Howlet, in Marmion (canto v. st. 16), and The Abbot (vol. iii. ch. 8). They are made use of, on both occasions, in the body of the dialogue.

† Bride of Lammermoor, vol. i. ch. 8.

‡ Referred to in Guy Mannering, vol. i. ch. 19. Paul's Letters, letter xiv.

§ Waverley, vol. i. ch. 3.

distinguished praise*; from Wordsworth he cites the lines which also appear in the title-page of Rob Roy†; he quotes with expressions of high admiration Mr. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner‡, a poem referred to in a manner no less flattering by the novelist§, who quotes it at least twice‖. We find in Paul's Letters a specimen of the same poet's translation of Schiller's Wallenstein introduced with warm commendations¶; and other extracts occur in the novels**. Southey's Thalaba, which is frequently quoted by the author of Waverley, is alluded to in Paul's Letters††. Crabbe, who is so often cited by the novelist, is at least closely studied by the poet, who has published an avowed imitation of his style‡‡. I find in Guy Mannering §§ a spirited passage from Dr. Leyden, who is so repeatedly and affectionately mentioned by the author of Marmion. The very frequent notice and warm praise of Miss Baillie's works by the author of Waverley, have been already observed upon. The author of Marmion is, if possible, a more constant and enthusiastic eulogist of that highly-gifted lady; uniting in his language the expressions of cordial friendship with those of applauding criticism. Shakspeare's lyre, he says, had

* See particularly Marmion, canto v. note 1. Paul's Letters, letter ii.

† Rokeby, canto iv. note 6.

‡ Lord of the Isles, canto i. note 9.

§ Monastery, vol. i. c. 11.

‖ Again, in The Bride of Lammermoor, vol. i. ch. 9.

¶ Letter xv.

** Guy Mannering, vol. i. ch. 4. Kenilworth, vol. ii. ch. 6.

†† Letter xv.

‡‡ The Poacher. Miscellaneous Poems, Edinburgh, 1820.

§§ Vol. i. ch. 8.

"—Silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years roll'd o'er;
When she, the bold Enchantress, came
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Monfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deem'd their own Shakespeare lived again."

Marmion. Introduction to canto iii.

In another place* she is mentioned as 'my gifted friend, 'Miss Joanna Baillie, whose dramatic works display such 'intimate acquaintance with the operations of human pas-'sion.' The lines quoted in Paul's Letters as those of 'our admired friend†,' are, I believe, Miss Baillie's; and in a note on Absalom and Achitophel she is styled 'the 'reviver of tragedy‡.' Can poetical ambition form a higher wish, than to merit such praises, and to receive them at such a hand?

It is a remarkable feature in the characters of both these writers, that, while they very seldom speak of a contemporary in terms of dispraise, they appear to feel a peculiar delight and pride in complimenting those who possess any title to their attention, either as personal friends, or as ornaments of general society. The introductory epistles in Marmion, addressed to gentlemen having both recommendations, were an early and marked proof of this disposition in the poet. Similar instances, though of a less finished and

* Rokeby, canto i. note 2. † Letter ix.
‡ Note iii. Dryden's Works, vol. ix.

elaborate description, abound in his other works, and particularly in his notes, prefaces, and introductions. The author of Waverley indulges his honest enthusiasm for merit and talent in his contemporaries and friends at the risk, I think, sometimes of betraying his secret. Among the many names which he has mentioned with characteristic warmth of commendation (and some of them with the kindness of old acquaintance) are those of his 'friends Wilkie 'and Allan*;' of Raeburn and Chantrey†; of Miss Edgeworth‡, Mrs. Hamilton, and Mrs. Grant§; of Mackenzie‖; of the author of Marriage, a novel¶; of Mr. Chalmers, the historian of Queen Mary**; and of the secretary to the Antiquarian Society in Scotland, 'the 'best amateur draftsman (says the novelist) in that kingdom††.' Dr. Graham, of Aberfoil, receives honourable mention for his urbanity and communicative disposition, and for his 'stores of legendary lore‡‡.' And a niche is found for Mr. John Ballantyne, the novelist's publisher, who is good-humouredly remembered, if I am not mistaken, in more than one passage§§.

I do not, however, find that the author of Marmion has hitherto in any of his productions taken notice of the author

* Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. iv. ch. 5.

† Waverley, vol. iii. ch. 23. Kenilworth, vol. iii. ch. 12.

‡ Waverley, concluding chapter. Monastery—Answer to Captain Clutterbuck.

§ Waverley, concluding chapter. ‖ Ibid.

¶ Tales of My Landlord, First Series, vol. iv. conclusion.

** Abbot, vol. iii. ch. 10. †† Introduction to Ivanhoe.

‡‡ Rob Roy, vol. iii. ch. 3.

§§ Answer to Captain Clutterbuck, Introduction to the Monastery. And (as I suppose) in the Introduction to the First Series of Tales of My Landlord.

of Waverley, either as an acquaintance or as an admired countryman and contemporary.

It now only remains to notice a few peculiarities in phraseology, which I think will fully complete the sum of proof necessary for identifying the two great compeers in romantic celebrity.

There is one general observation on this subject, which, I think, has considerable weight. In every work of each writer, which, by its nature, admits the indulgence of such a humour, occasion is taken to introduce a vein of quaint, formal, and antiquated discourse, where the thoughts appear in a kind of masquerade dress, sometimes the garb of a remote age, sometimes an anomalous and merely fanciful costume. I scarcely need recall to your mind the old-fashioned turn of expression adopted in the Lay of the Last Minstrel, as appropriate to that species of fable, and never wholly discarded in the subsequent poetical romances. I believe there is not a single volume of the novels in which some personage is not appointed to entertain us with the burlesque solemnity of an obsolete and affected diction. The Baron of Bradwardine performs this office admirably well in Waverley; Mr. Sampson sustains it in Guy Mannering; Monkbarns, in The Antiquary; Andrew Fair-Service, occasionally, in Rob Roy; Jedediah Cleishbotham, in the introductions and notes to the Tales of My Landlord; Pound-text, Kettledrummle, and Mause, in Old Mortality; David Deans, in some parts of The Heart of Mid Lothian (I say in some parts, for the language of this as of other characters by the same author becomes simple and energetic, or forced and fantastical, as occasions vary); Caleb Balderstone, in The Bride of Lammermoor; Dalgetty, in A Legend of Montrose; Sir Piercie Shafton, and, in a different style, Father Boniface, in The Monastery; and Doctor Luke

Lundin, in the Abbot. But in the last two novels, as in Ivanhoe and Kenilworth, the whole dialogue is of an antique fashion; which, however, becomes more or less marked as the scene is tranquil or impassioned, humorous or pathetic.

The coincidences falling within the scope of verbal criticism, which appear to me most worth notice, are these.

The word 'peril' is continually used as a verb by both writers.

"Nor peril aught for me agen."
Lady of the Lake, Canto II. St. 26.

"I peril'd thus the helpless child."
Lord of the Isles, Canto V. St. 10.

"Before that adventure be peril'd and won."
Harold the Dauntless, Canto IV. St. 14.

'Were the blood of all my ancestors in my veins, I 'would have peril'd it in this quarrel.'—*Waverley,* vol. iii. ch. 20.

'To avoid perilling what I prize so highly.'—*Bride of Lammermoor,* vol. ii. ch. 8.

'The person of least consequence—were better perilled.'—*Abbot,* vol. iii. ch. 10.

'I were undeserving his grace, did I not peril it for his 'good.'—*Ivanhoe,* vol. iii. ch. 11.

'You may peril your own soul, if you list.'—*Kenilworth,* vol. i. ch. 9.

Many more instances might be given, particularly from the last two novels.

The old-fashioned, if not obsolete substantive 'cumber,' signifying perplexity or embarrassment, is used by both writers.

" Sage counsel in cumber."

Lady of the Lake, Canto III. St. 16.

'Thou, good fellow, shalt have no more cumber with 'me.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. iii. ch. 1.

The verb to cumber is often employed in the same sense; as, 'Who would cumber themselves about pedlar's tidings?' —*Kenilworth*, vol. ii. ch. 8.

'Cumber' for incumbrance, occurs in one passage. 'The 'miller's daughter will be no farther cumber to you.'— *Monastery*, vol. iii. ch. 4.

'Space' is often put for 'time.'

" Short space he stood—then waved his hand."

Lady of the Lake, Canto V. St. 10.

'Dryden's residence at the university was prolonged to 'the unusual space of nearly seven years.'—*Life of Dryden*, sect. i. p. 31.

'—— The incidents which had occurred in that space' (the Annus Mirabilis, 1666).—*Ibid.* p. 58.

'I will return in brief space.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. ii. ch. 10.

'To give her—space to plead her own cause.'—*Ibid.* vol. iii. ch. 6.

'Pay' for 'return' or 'requite.'

" The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid."

Lady of the Lake, Canto II. St. 24.

'Mr. D. Swift paid the cold and reluctant courtesy of his 'illustrious relative with the warmest attachment.'—*Life of Swift*, sect. vii. p. 447.

" Permit I marshal you the way."

Lady of the Lake, Canto VI. St. 10.

" —— Marshalling the stranger's way."
Rokeby, Canto I. St. 5.

'I must marshall them the way to the high altar.'—*Abbot*, vol. i. ch. 13.

'Ratcliffe marshalled her the way to the apartment.'—*Heart of Mid Lothian*, vol. ii. ch. 8.

" Despite thine arrows and thy bow."
Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto III. St. 19.

" Despite those titles, power, and pelf."
Ibid. Canto VI. St. 1.

'Despite the uncertainty of my situation.'—*Rob Roy*, vol. iii. ch. 7.

'Despite the asseverations of Edie Ochiltree.'—*Antiquary*, vol. ii. ch. 6.

'Despite my Dutch education.'—*Guy Mannering*, vol. i. ch. 21.

" Their hands oft grappled to their swords."
Lady of the Lake, Canto vi. St. 4.

" ——— their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand."
Ibid. Canto II. St. 34.

'His quivering fingers griped towards the handle of his 'sword.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. i. ch. 5.

A slight inaccuracy of construction in the following sentence,

" Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face and sunburn'd hair,
She had not known her child."
Marmion, Canto I. St. 28.

Is thus repeated,—"A countenance so much reduced by 'loss of blood . . . . that no one could have recognized in it 'the gallant soldier who had behaved with so much spirit 'at the skirmish of Loudon-hill.'—*Old Mortality*, vol. iii. ch. 15.

'For whom then hast thou ventured . . . . to seek to rend 'the prey from the valiant?'—*Tales of my Landlord*, First Series, vol. iv. ch. 14.

> "To spoil the spoiler as we may,
> And from the robber rend the prey?"
> *Lady of the Lake*, Canto 5. St. 7.

> "From the chafed tyger rend the prey."
> *Bridal of Triermain*, Canto I. St. 19.

I have already noticed the occasional inadvertent use of Scoticisms by the author of Waverley. Nor is the poet exempt from slips of the same kind; such as the writing 'will' for 'shall;' 'We will fall considerably under the 'mark.'—*Life of Dryden*, sect. ii. p. 116. ed. 1808. 'Pays' instead of 'pays for,'—'Shaftesbury pays the lenity with 'which Monmouth is dismissed.'—*Ibid.* sect. v. p. 245. To be 'long of' doing a thing; 'The storm—was not long 'of bursting.'—*Life of Swift*, sect. v. p. 280. To inquire 'at' a person; 'Inquiries were frequently made at his faith-'ful clerk Roger Coxe.'—*Ibid.* sect. ii. p. 68.* And a few other irregularities of idiom, with which I will not now detain you.

Both writers sometimes employ the same form of words to announce a transition from one part of the fable to another.

* The same inaccuracy is found in the novels: Antiquary, vol. i. ch. 5; Monastery, vol. i. ch. 6.

'Our tale now returns to Isaac of York.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. iii. ch. 5.

'The tenor of our tale carries us back to the Castle of 'Lochleven.'—*Abbot*, vol. iii. ch. 7.

"With Bruce and Ronald bides the tale."
Lord of the Isles, Canto III. St. 12.

"Yes, sweep they on!—We will not leave
For them that triumph, those who grieve.
* * * * *
Yes! sweep they on!—But with that skiff
Abides the minstrel tale."
Ibid. Canto I. St. 17.

'Our tale draws to a conclusion. The Marquis of A—— 'arrived on the subsequent day, . . . and after renewing in 'vain a search for the body, returned,' &c.—*Bride of Lammermoor*, vol. iii. ch. 8.

"Gladly I turn me from the sight
Unto my tale again.
Short is my tale:—Fitz-Eustace' care
A pierced and mangled body bare
To moated Lichfield's lofty pile."
Marmion, Canto VI. St. 35, 6.

The following form of narration is used commonly in the novels, and although somewhat prosaic, is adopted once at least in the poems.

'To rid the Captain of his cumbrous greaves, and case 'his feet in a pair of brogues made out of deer skin . . . . was 'the work of a minute.'—*Tales of My Landlord*, Third Series, vol. iv. ch. 6.

'To snatch a mace from the pavement . . . . to rush on

'the Templar's band, and to strike in quick succession to 'the right and left, levelling a warrior at each blow, was, 'for Athelstane's great strength .... but the work of a 'single moment.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. iii. ch. 1.

"To wrench the sword from Wilfrid's hand,
To dash him headlong on the sand,
Was but one moment's work."——

Rokeby, Canto II. St. 21.

The novelist and poet sometimes make the word 'you' serve the purpose of the French particle 'on.'

'—— Flowers and fruits were represented' (on a carpet) 'in such glowing and natural colours, that you hesitated to 'place the foot on such exquisite workmanship.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. i. ch. 6.

'You might read in his vacant eye and troubled brow, 'that his thoughts were far absent'—*Ibid.* vol. iii. ch. 12.

"You see that all is loneliness:——
* * * * *
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude."

Marmion, Introduction to Canto II.

"The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne."

Ibid. Canto IV. St. 7.

'—— When the translator places before you, not the 'exact words, but the image of the original .... the licence '.... has an infinite charm.'—*Life of Dryden*, concluding section, p. 514.

Both writers are fond of the effect produced by substantives linked in pairs, as 'tower and town,' 'stock and

'rock,' 'bank and bourne*,' 'isle and islet, strait and 'bay†,' 'hall and bower,' 'down and dale‡,' 'foam and 'ripple§,' 'hill and hollow‖,' 'moss and hagg¶,' 'crag 'and stone**,' 'town and tower††,' 'glancing wide over 'hill and dale‡‡.'

'From turret to foundation-stone.'—*Monastery*, Introductory Epistle.

"From turret to foundation-stone."
Marmion, Canto VI. St. 13.

Other words are sometimes coupled in the same manner. 'His friend with the battle-axe immediately whistled clear 'and shrill.'—*Waverley*, vol. i. ch. 16.

"Sudden his guide whooped loud and high."
Lady of the Lake, Canto IV. St. 20.

'Therewithal he whistled sharp and shrill.'—*Kenilworth*, vol. i. ch. 10.

"Stretching forward free and far."
Lady of the Lake, Canto I. St. 2.

In Marmion the poet speaks of—

* Lady of the Lake, canto i. st. 7. 30; iv. st. 16.
† Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto vi. st. 21.
‡ Marmion, canto i. st. 21; vi. st. 34.
§ Lady of the Lake, canto iii. st. 12. 'In ripple and in foam.' —*Abbot*, vol. iii. ch. 5.
‖ Monastery, vol. iii. ch. 11. ¶ Abbot, vol. ii. ch. 2.
** Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. iv. ch. 13.
†† Kenilworth, vol. ii. ch. 9.
‡‡ Bride of Lammermoor, vol. iii. ch. 7.

" Thunder-dint, and flashing levin."

Canto I. St. 23.

And Friar Tuck, in Ivanhoe, says that the castle fell in 'as with wild thunder-dint and levin-fire.'—Vol. iii. ch. 2.

In the description of the Trosachs we have—

" ——— many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle."

Lady of the Lake, Canto I. St. 11.

And in the Heart of Mid Lothian—'a sea-ward view of 'the shattered and thunder-splitten peaks of Arran.'—Vol. iv. ch. 8.

In the Lady of the Lake—

" The deep-mouth'd blood-hound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way."

Canto I. St. 1.

And in Montrose—'the deep-mouthed baying of a hound was heard coming down the wind.'—Last vol. ch. 6.

'Permit me, for thine own soul's sake, to speak a few 'words to these misguided men.'—*Abbot,* vol. i. ch. 14.

" For that good deed, permit me then
A word with these misguided men."

Lady of the Lake, Canto V. St. 27.

The following peculiar turn of expression—

" He trimm'd the fire, and gave to shine
With bickering light the splinter'd pine—"

Lord of the Isles, Canto III. St. 28.

is not, I believe, unfrequent in the poems, and may also be met with in the novels; thus—

'Dame Elspeth assisted to disembarrass the damsel . . . . 'of her hood, mantle, and the rest of her riding gear, giving 'her to appear as beseemed the buxom daughter of the 'wealthy miller.'—*Monastery*, vol. ii. ch. 1.

"Beneath an oak he laid him down,
That in the blaze gleamed ruddy brown."
Rokeby, Canto V. St. 37.

'—— An ancient forest of Scottish firs, the topmost of 'which—gleamed ruddy in the setting sun.'—*Legend of Montrose*, ch. 4.

'The victors—gazed—upon the flames, in which their 'own ranks and arms glanced dusky red.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. iii. ch. 1.

The word 'plash,' which is a favourite with the author of Marmion,

"The mildew drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash, upon the stone."
Marmion, Canto II. St. 18.

"The short dark waves ——
With ceaseless plash, kiss'd cliff or sand—"
Lord of the Isles, Canto III. St. 28.

is also used in the Antiquary. The 'waters' of the lake 'were only distinguished by their sullen and murmuring 'plash against the beach.'—Vol. ii. ch. 10.

"He mann'd himself with dauntless air."
Lady of the Lake, Canto V. St. 10.

'My hair bristled and my knees shook. I manned my-

'self, however, and determined to return,' &c.—*Waverley*, vol. iii. ch. 12.

Both writers, the one in his Introduction to the Monastery (letter to Captain Clutterbuck), the other in his Life of Swift (concluding section, page 497), use the name Utopia to denote the realm of imagination in general, not confining it, as the etymology requires, to supposed regions of absolute perfection.

The familiar appellation of 'Bluff King Hal' is applied to Henry the Eighth in Marmion,

> "Bluff King Hal the curtain drew."
>
> Canto VI. St. 38.

And in Kenilworth—'a reverend father Abbot, who was 'fain to give place to bluff King Hall.'—Vol. ii. ch. 6.

The following antique expression is several times repeated by the novelist and poet:

> "To him he lost his lady-love."
>
> *Marmion*, Canto I. St. 12.

> "Memorial of his ladye-love."
>
> *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Canto IV. St. 16.

'I vow by the name of my bright lady-love.'—*Ivanhoe*, vol. 2. ch. 15.

'I know no right of chivalry,' he said, 'more precious or 'inalienable than that of each free knight to choose his 'lady-love by his own judgment.'—*Ibid.* vol. i. ch. 9.

It cannot, I think, appear frivolous or irrelevant, in the inquiry we are pursuing, to dwell on these minute coincidences. Unimportant indeed they are if looked upon as subjects of direct criticism; but considered with reference to our present purpose, they resemble those light substances

which, floating on the trackless sea, discover the true setting of some mighty current: they are the buoyant drift-wood which betrays the hidden communication of two great poetic oceans.

I will now, Sir, conclude a series of remarks which, perhaps, would never have been commenced if I could have anticipated the length to which they have insensibly extended. You will smile when I declare that in every part of these letters I have been anxious to compress my observations as far as appeared consistent with a proper treatment of the question, and that scarcely any topic has been dismissed because the materials were exhausted. But who, in speaking of a favourite author, was ever able to confine himself within his proposed limits? And what subject of discussion ever yielded stronger inducements to deviate and to linger, than the theme on which I have detained you? When our path lies amidst the richest and sweetest flowers, is it easy to press on unrelaxing to the goal? Too often, I confess, have illustrations been selected, as much, at least, for beauty as for aptness; arguments have been followed up, when there remained no weightier motive for pursuing them than the pleasure of pursuit; comparative criticism has lost itself in positive disquisition; and the result has been this enormous intrusion on your leisure, for which I dare not now solicit your favourable consideration, but I anxiously entreat your indulgence.

Yet, Sir, however mortified I might feel at having wearied you by a tedious and rambling dissertation, there is another point on which I should be much more sorry to have transgressed. If these letters merely fatigue your patience, you will lay them aside, and part with them, I hope, in charity; but it would be a heavy reproach upon their author, if you dismissed them with a feeling of just

displeasure at any freedom used with that great writer and respected man, who adds to his other titles of honour that of being your friend. But on this head I have little apprehension. In addressing to you a course of remarks affecting our admired poet and biographer, I have not thought myself permitted to advance a single observation which might not with propriety have been urged in his own presence. As I have never felt the most transient inclination to violate this rule, I am persuaded that neither zeal nor inadvertence can in any instance have led me to infringe it. If personal topics have been insisted on, they are of a nature wholly inoffensive, and such only as the poet has himself supplied in his acknowledged publications. For the liberty I have taken with some passages of his works which appeared open to critical reflection, I would not (supposing him acquainted with what I had written) offend his excellent sense by offering an apology, nor do I offer any to you.

The secret I have attempted to penetrate, may fairly be regarded as a riddle propounded to the public; an enigma, of which they have no right to demand the solution, but every man may freely promulgate his own. In attempting to unravel such a mystery by honest and open means, there can surely be neither officiousness nor indiscretion. The materials out of which this essay is formed, were lying in the full view of the world; I have combined them as my own fancy and judgment guided me: if my speculations are ill-founded, they yield a new testimony to the address of him who can so skilfully elude conjecture; if just, they serve, indeed, to fix and determine our opinions, but they leave the mysterious subject of our inquiries as fully master of his secret as he was before those inquiries began. It cannot be wrested from

him by mere argumentative proof, nor would I have adduced any other, even though it had been in my possession. If a mask excites our curiosity, we may endeavour to detect him by his voice, his walk, his jests, his minute habits, his choice of character, his selection of colours, his general style of dress; but it would be a pitiful and sordid diligence which sought to make assurance perfect by prying into his dressing-room, overhearing his directions to his servants, or secretly pursuing him to his home.

I earnestly hope that the author of Waverley may never be disturbed in his concealment by this mean and mechanical spirit of inquisition, even though he should indefinitely prolong the duration of our present uncertainty. All legitimate endeavours to read his riddle, he may, I think, regard with unmoved complacency, retaining his disguise in spite of them, so long as it shall be his pleasure to wear one. And late, very late may he discard it, if the mystery it casts around his person be in any degree propitious to the exercise of that genius which has so exalted and enriched our literature. The gratification of curiosity, however intense, would be a grievous misfortune, if attended by a cessation of the wonder-working power which has raised our curiosity so high.

" The charm was broke, when the spirit spoke,
And it murmur'd sullenlie,
* * * * *
'Alas! that ever thou raised'st thine eyes,
Thine eyes to look on me.' "
Lord Soulis, *Border Minstrelsy*, Vol. III. Part 3.

There may perhaps be an appearance of undue freedom towards our admirable poet, in the very act of associating his name so pointedly and unreservedly as I have,

with that of another writer, who, after all, is, possibly, as much a stranger to him as myself. For this error, if such you deem it, I can only plead in excuse the zeal arising from attachment to a long cherished opinion, and from a warm, perhaps a romantic wish, that it may prove well-founded. The unclaimed honours of the novelist must ultimately descend on some head, and I would gladly see them rest on one which has already been adorned with wreaths of literary triumph. There is a magnificence in the thought that all these noble fictions, in poetry and in prose, are the vast and various creation of one genius, one versatile and energetic mind, such as our country, such as the world has seldom seen disporting itself in works of imagination. And if this mighty talent is to be discovered in a single mortal, there is none in whom I should so much rejoice to find it recognized as the ardent, the chivalrous, the tender, the stainless, the patriotic Minstrel of the Border. It is, I am well aware, an intrusion even to "thrust greatness" upon one who would decline it; but the zeal which is distasteful to him, may meet indulgence, and even sympathy from his admirers: and you, I am sure, will pardon the mistaken, if mistaken, enthusiasm which would invest your honoured friend with the sovereignty of a twofold intellectual kingdom, more valuable than Spain and the Indies.

I have the honour to be, &c.

THE END.

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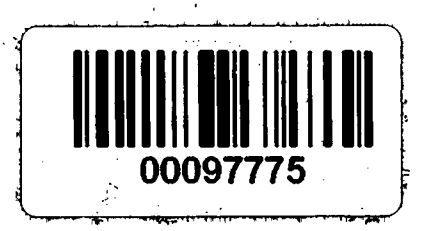
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